Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FORTY-NINE

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The Untried Year

"If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

"Lord, go before and point the road,
I know not whither it may lead.
Nor what the work Thou hast decreed—
Enough that Thou wilt bear the load!

"It is Thy hand that stirs the nest,
That sets these changeful tunes for me:
But, Lord, there is no change with Thee,
And Thou art my unfailing rest.

"O, help me through the toil and heat,
To follow closely by Thy side,
Ere yet the gracious dew has dried
From off the treadings of Thy feet.

"That which I see not, teach Thou me:
And what Thy wisdom still withholds,
Until Thy patient love unfolds,
In child-like trust I leave to Thee.

"Let Thy sweet presence light My way,
And hallow every cross I bear:
Transmuting duty, conflict, care,
Into love's service, day by day.

"Whatever future lot be mine,
My Savior, bless its good or ill:
And let Thy hand be with me still,
And turn the water into wine."—Z. '17: 168.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Eastern friends will be glad to know that Brother Zinck is leaving immediately to serve them. Any who specially desire his services will please communicate with the office. A Central Eastern Convention has been arranged to be held at Richfield, Wis., on March 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, 1921., at which Bros. Palmer, Zinck and Edwards will serve. As it is not possible to arrange a series of conventions at this time, the friends are urged to make a special effort to be at Richfield. For further information about this convention please apply to Bro. Wm. Dhein, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

Bros. Zinck and Edwards will be returning to the Pacific Coast soon after the convention, and Brother Palmer will continue his services in the East.

All the children of God who are true to their covenant are working out their salvation from day to day. It is a work of sacrifice, a daily work of crucifixion of the flesh. From the beginning of our consecrated life we are reckoned as being fully "crucified with Christ"; but the actual crucifixion is a slow, painful, lingering process, and ends only with the completion of our sacrifice in death.—Z. '16: 55.

◆

Let us learn this lesson—to look through all of life's experiences for the accomplishment of the Divine purposes. When we become discouraged with trials or difficulties, yet know that we are faithfully serving the Lord and in line with the teachings of his Word, we should have faith to believe that the end of his dealings with us will fully justify every trial and difficulty between.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."
—Z. '09: 24.

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It is encouraging for us to know that this warfare is not one which we must wage alone. All the powers of Heaven are enlisted on our behalf. Our God has led us thus far in the willing and the doing of His good pleasure, and He will continue thus to lead and help us and work in us by His Word of Truth, if we continue to give heed to His counsel. —Z. '16: 54.

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It is not the prerogative of all the brethren and sisters in the Church to endeavor to set each other right, unless it be in some personal matter especially related to themselves. In such cases the advice given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 should be strictly followed. An Elder, however, by his very election to his office, has been asked to take such oversight of the affairs of the congregation, to give such advice, to administer such reproofs, as the nature of the case may demand—in meekness, remembering himself also lest he should be tempted, if not along the same lines, then possibly along some other line of temptation. He, too, of course, should practise Matthew 18:15-17.—Galatians 6:1.

By way of impressing this duty of oversight upon the Elders, St. Paul reminded them that the Lord had purchased this Flock with the precious blood of the Lamb of God, and that this value in the Lord's sight should be so deeply impressed upon their minds, that they would be willing to lay down their lives for the brethren in any service which they could render.—Z. '16: 235, 236.

◆

The Master truly said to His followers, "Without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) It is the Divine Power which operates through our Lord Jesus, through the Word of Truth, through the followers of Jesus; and this Power can operate in the weakest members of the Body of Christ as well as in the strongest. **The Lord's grace is sufficient for all and for every time of need.** We are not to forget, however, that this great sufficiency is not poured out upon the Lord's people unconditionally, but in answer to their appreciation of their need and their prayerful request for grace Divine in every time of need.—Z. '16: 249.

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Fervent in Prayer—Watching Thereunto

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints."—Ephesians 6:18.

PRAYER is a wonderful privilege. It is a very great favor to be permitted to approach the Supreme Ruler of the Universe with our petitions. We should come, therefore, in the spirit of deep appreciation, of earnestness and humility and reverence. The greater our earnestness, the more acceptable will be our prayers, and the more abundant blessings shall we receive.

There is a great deal of formal prayer. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near unto God with the lips, while the heart is far from Him. (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-9.) It would be better not to approach the Lord at all than to do so in an improper manner. The man who merely utters words with His lips is not praying. A Christian should not say prayers, but should pray. We should not think of saying even one word that we do not mean and have not thought out. Many people have done themselves injury by praying in a formalistic manner.

When we come to the Father, let us draw nigh in spirit—with the heart, the understanding, the mind—whether the prayer be long or short. Let us come with true and earnest devotion, with supplication, that He may see our intense desire in the matter. As our Lord said, the Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. Without the spirit of prayer our petitions amount to nothing.

No one may offer prayer to the Father except those who have accepted His terms, and have come into relationship with Him as sons, through the great Advocate. Others are aliens and strangers. There is a difference between worship, or thanksgiving, and prayer. Any one may offer worship—adoration, homage. Any one may bow the knee and express thanks and appreciation. But the privilege of making requests of God is directly limited to those who have been accepted in Christ.

There is a difference, too, between prayer and supplication. The term prayer applies to any petition, great or small; whereas the term supplication means a special, agonizing desire for a thing—entreaty with intense yearning. But whether it is prayer in the ordinary sense, or intense prayer—supplication—we should always come in the spirit, with an appreciation of the fact that we are entering into the presence of the great Creator and that in thus doing we are enjoying a great privilege.

"Watching Thereunto"

St. Paul adds, "and watching thereunto." Watching seems to be an attitude of mental alertness. If we really believe that the Lord has indicated that we should pray for the things we need, and that He will give us these things, then we should be on the alert to recognize when we receive them. We should take heed as to the things for which we ask, and be sure that we ask for the things promised, the things for which we are entitled to ask.

We should also watch for the Lord's providential leadings. The person who, after having prayed, forgets what he prayed for, and who cannot tell whether or not he has received an answer to his petition, has certainly missed a great blessing which it is designed that he should have.

Prayer is not to be offered to be heard of man, but of God. It is intended to be a stimulation to our hearts and to quicken us to an expectancy of certain things; and it should be our earnest endeavor to keep our lives in harmony with our requests. When Jesus told His disciples to pray the Lord of the Harvest that He would send more laborers into His Harvest, He did not mean that they were to tell the Heavenly Father His business; but that they should be solicitous that others come into the work; and that the disciples themselves should watch for opportunities of service, in harmony with their prayers.

The Lord frequently called attention to the fact that we should be **persevering** in prayer. Perseverance is an **essential quality** in the sight of God. It includes patience, carefulness and interest. In short, it is related to every fruit of the Spirit which the Lord's people are to cultivate. **Patience is good, but it needs** perseverance. *Love* is good, but it needs *perseverance.*

Perseverance does not **make** the will. The will is already there. It is the will that God recognizes in the beginning. But by various experiences, trials, difficulties, tests of endurance, the Lord would prove us and develop us. He would have us become very positive characters in all these qualities which have His approval. So our praying should all be in the spirit, from the heart. We should watch thereunto with perseverance day by day.

Lessons Learned by the Lord's Delay

Perhaps one reason why our Lord does not answer our petitions quickly is that He desires us to learn to watch for the answer and thereby get the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him, as we realize that He has given us our request. We should therefore pray with all perseverance, watching for the answer until it come—not watching merely for a few minutes, or for a day or a week. The Lord might see best to further defer the answer to our petition, either to test our faith or to increase our earnestness and get us into a better condition to receive the blessing. It requires time to become emptied of self and prepared to receive the mind of Christ; and with some, more time is required than with others.

We are sure that the Lord will pursue that course which is best for us, just as a teacher with his pupils, and a parent with his children. The parent exercises judgment as to what is best for the child. So our Heavenly Father wishes to give us the good things. Sometimes He sees best that we wait a long time before getting the answer to our petitions; at other times He may give us a speedy answer to our prayer. Nevertheless, as the Apostle Paul declares, we know that all things are working together for our good, because we love God and have been called according to His purpose. And we must ever bear in mind the conditions which our Lord imposes: "If ye **abide in Me,** and **My words abide in you,** ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7.

We must search the Scriptures to know what is the mind of the Lord, what He has **promised** and what He has **not** promised. **The fully consecrated will not want anything which is not in fullest harmony with the will of Him we so love and adore,** and who is so worthy of our love and loyalty. We must remember, too, that while we are praying with persistence and faith, the Lord is preparing for us, not only the blessing and opportunity of service which we desire, but He is also preparing the circumstances and conditions which will bring this blessing or opportunity in the best form. This will require our **waiting on the Lord,** which should be in perfect trust and patience for His good time to grant the desire of our hearts. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."—James 5:16.—R. V.

Family prayer is also very desirable in the homes of the Lord's saints, wherever possible; and prayer amongst the children of God when they assemble together is eminently proper. Our Lord sanctioned this by praying with and for His disciples; and it was also commended by the Apostles. We are to pray, not for ourselves only, but for all of the saints and for the interests of the Lord's Cause. The Scriptures commend both public and private prayer amongst the children of God. But secret prayer **is absolutely essential** to the life of a Christian.

Prayerful Attitude Alone Not Sufficient

We have been surprised occasionally to hear some professed follower of Christ urging the impropriety of a form of prayer in words, and of assuming any particular posture in prayer, or of praying at any stated time, asserting that kneeling in prayer is unnecessary—that all of life should be a prayer. Such a proposition is astounding to us—the logic of it is incomprehensible. True, we are to pray always, to be always in the spirit of prayer, to be so devoted to the Lord that we shall **ever** manifest in our lives the beauty of holiness, that we shall be shining lights in the world. But we hold that **no Christian** can maintain this heart attitude, or glorify God in his life, without going to the Lord in a particular and formal manner, and preferably upon his knees, and if possible in solitude at certain times. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to Thy Father which is in secret."—Matthew 6:6.

Our dear Master's constant attitude of prayer did not hinder His more particular devotions when He turned aside from the busy affairs of His life to converse with the Father in secret—sometimes briefly and sometimes spending the entire night in prayer in the mountain solitude. The very isolation of the Lord from all human help drew him the nearer and the oftener to the Father in prayer and communion. So it is, or should be, with all the true followers of the Master. As we grow in His character-likeness we will, like Him, pray without ceasing, in everything giving thanks, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, recognizing Him as the center of all our hopes and our joys.

Our "Solitary Way"

We all realize at times the inability of even our dearest ones to enter fully into and appreciate our sorrows and our needs. They are unable to sympathize with us fully in our struggles and our trials. This realization should send us, as it did our dear Lord, the more frequently to the Throne of Grace, where we are always sure of having the ear of One who understands us perfectly and can make all needful allowance for our frailty; who knows the limit of our ability to do and to be, in our Imperfect flesh; and who can give us the perfect sympathy which none other can give. He never fails to hear and to heed the cry of His children, even though He may for a wise purpose in love defer for a time a visible answer to their pleas.

Jacob An Example

The prayer of Jacob at the time he was anticipating a meeting with Esau on his return from Padan-Aram may be considered one of the most excellent examples of earnest, persevering prayer to be found in the Lord's Word. It is full of confidence and trust in God. It recounts God's Promise to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac and the renewal of this promise to himself. He mentions to the Lord His promise also to bring him again to his home land. His humility is shown in his words: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant; for with my staff [only] I passed over this Jordan [when fleeing from home], and now I have become two bands [great companies]."—Genesis 32:10.

He tells the Lord of his fear of Esau, yet shows that his fear is offset by his confidence in the Almighty. It was at this time, and doubtless in answer to this prayer, that the angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob, and so full of faith was he in the Power of God and in His Promise to protect him and make of him a great nation, that he laid physical hold upon the angel, declaring: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" The angel here appeared as a man; but Jacob had recognized him as the representative of the Lord, sent to meet him.

We cannot suppose that the angel was not sufficiently powerful to release himself from the grasp of Jacob, but rather that God was pleased to bless him, and that these circumstances were designed for the very purpose of drawing out Jacob's longing desire for this blessing of the Lord, to demonstrate the depth and intensity of his desire. When this was proven, when he had manifested his deep appreciation of the blessing which God alone could give, and this great longing to be in harmony with Him, then the blessing came—Jacob's victory. God was pleased to reward such faith and energy and zeal.

Lessons to Spiritual Israel

Jacob was only a natural man, yet his prayer has in it a lesson that may be of much profit to New Creatures in Christ; not that we should wrestle with God as did Jacob, for we are sons of God, and sons have a much closer relationship than servants, and have no need to wrestle with God to gain His favor. The late Bishop Phillips Brooks expressed the true thought very beautifully and succinctly when he said, "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance; it is laying hold upon God's willingness." We have His favor now; and He has promised us His choicest blessings. But Jacob's earnest zeal and faith and humility and his perseverance of mind are well worthy of our emulation and imitation. We should always pray and not faint, as our Lord reminded us. God wishes us to be persistent, and to have unwavering faith in His willingness to give us His best gifts.

If the blessing in answer to our prayer does not come in the moment of asking, we are to continue "instant in prayer," patiently waiting for the Lord's due time, in an attitude of entire, sweet submission to His will, assured that if the answer be delayed it is because our Father in His wisdom sees a reason for it and has our highest welfare at heart. He is never indifferent to His children nor unheeding of their needs and of their cry for help and for fellowship with Him. But **let us see to it that God's glory is our chiefest desire.**

Alas, how many spiritual Israelites seem to have a much less keen appreciation of propriety in prayer than had Jacob! He asked for God's blessing, in whatever manner He might be pleased to give it. Jacob did not specify even the earthly good things which God had promised him. He desired the Lord's glory in the fulfilling to him and his posterity of His great Covenant. Many of God's children ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, that the answer may minister to the desires of their flesh. The Lord has promised to care for the temporal necessities of His children and will surely give them what is best, whether this be little or much.

How few seem to remember that as New Creatures our desires and requests should be especially for the things that pertain to our spiritual interests; that it is this class of blessings that the Father desires us to have, and has promised to give us! He assures us that as earthly parents are pleased to give good gifts to their children, so our Father delights to give us His Holy Spirit—His very best gift—the gift which comprises all blessing and glory, which will insure to us everything which is desirable, in the very highest sense. If the Lord's people who have consecrated their all to Him, could be brought to the point where their one aim in life, **the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the Spirit of the Lord,** the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of a sound mind, what an unspeakable blessing it would mean!

Israel—Mighty With God

Jacob got the blessing and with it a change of name. Thenceforth he was called Israel, which signifies, Mighty with God, or "A Prince with God." This new name therefore was always a source of encouragement to him, an incentive to fresh zeal and to trust in the Lord. All of Jacob's posterity adopted this name. We have in antitype Christ Jesus, our Lord, the true Israel, the One who through faith and obedience to the Father has prevailed, who has overcome the world, the flesh and the Adversary, and has received the highest blessing of God as the result of His great struggle. He is now supremely exalted, and is declared to be the Prince of the kings of the earth. He has sat down with the Father in His Throne.

We also, the followers of Jesus, bear the name of Israel. We, like Him, if faithful as was He, shall be exalted by the Father. We shall share with our Lord and Head His Throne. We shall be made higher than angels, principalities and powers, as our Master has been. How glorious this thought! How wonderful! Should not this great hope inspire us to the utmost diligence and carefulness that we may make our calling and election sure?

If we prove faithful unto death, the name Vi[illegible] or "Mighty with God," will be our name. It will apply to every one of the Lord's fa[illegible] as it applied to our Head. But only those who manifest His Spirit, only those who so love God that they will hold on to His promise and who will not let Him go without the blessing, will receive the fulfilment of the promise and will reign with Christ in glory and share His Throne.

Jacob had a method of marking the special manifestations of Divine providence—as when he called the place in which he wrestled with the angel **Peniel—"the face of God."** This was a reminder to him that there he had been privileged to receive from the Lord a particular blessing, a marked answer to prayer. Similarly it is profitable to Spiritual Israel that we should make note in some special manner of the Lord's mercies and providences to us. Many feel poor as respects the favor and blessing of the Lord, simply because they have failed to let these blessings make a proper impression upon their hearts at the time they were received. We are all leaky vessels, and unless special notation of these favors of the Lord are made upon the tablets of memory, or in some other way, their lesson and the encouragement and strength which they bring are largely lost to us.

Doubtless we should all have more "Bethels" and more "Peniels" did we but follow the course of setting up some kind of monuments of our Father's faithfulness in His answers to our prayers, and there entering into some covenant or vow with the Lord in return for these His mercies. As each watches for fresh evidence daily of the love and special watch-care of our God over us, we shall find that we have far more cause for encouragement and thanksgiving than we would be aware of without such notation and watchfulness. Let each of us, then, daily, weekly raise to God our "Ebenezers," if we would increase our faith and joy and love.—Z. '14:182-184.

The New Life In Christ

Eph. 2:1-10.

Golden Text—"By grace are ye saved through faith."—Eph. 2: 8.

IT WAS from his Roman prison that the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians, one of the most beautiful of all his letters to the churches: full of deep spiritual instruction. Its keynote is "in Christ," this expression, or its equivalents, occurring at least twenty times in this Epistle. As the first chapter points out that the Church is **chosen in Christ Jesus,** so our lesson shows that we have life in Christ alone; and, subsequently, the Epistle shows that all of God's blessings and favors toward his people are solely upon consideration that they are **in Christ Jesus**—members of the body of Christ, members of the New Creation. None can get clear-cut, distinct appreciation of the Apostle's meaning except those who clearly differentiate between the Church and the world, and discern their different hopes, built upon different promises: and perceive that in God's plan only the Church is being dealt with at the present time—that the world's hope is future, and very different from that of the Church, now being called as the body of Christ, "members in particular."

Our lesson opens with a dark picture, delineating the condition of the whole world through the fall; a condition of sin and worldliness under the power of Satan; in disobedience to God, under divine sentence of death, which has already operated to the extent of corruption in matters moral, mental and physical. The whole world, although creatures of God, and thus in a general sense his offspring, or children, ceased to be children of his favor, and became "children of wrath," through sin. The Apostle points out to the Ephesians that this had once been their wretched and terrible condition in common with the rest of mankind. How true is the picture even today! But let it be remembered that this is not merely the picture of the villains and outlaws of the world, but a picture of the world as a whole, including its very best representatives. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All are "children of wrath"; all are more or less under the power and control of the great Adversary; all are more or less controlled by the spirit of disobedience common to the whole world of mankind.

The only exceptions to this rule are the few who, like those addressed at Ephesus, have escaped this bondage, this corruption, this death state, this condition of alienation from God:—and **surely these are few today,** as they were in all but a "little flock" in the days of the Lord and at the time the Apostle wrote these words.

But the Apostle passes on to note what a great change came to the saints at Ephesus, on their acceptance of the Gospel; and how glad we are that a similar change has come to all who have become the Lord's saints, from that day to the present time! The experience of passing from death to life is the same in every instance, although the circumstances connected with the transformation may vary considerably. The steps of grace by which the Lord delivered us from being children of wrath and under power of the Adversary are set forth by the Apostle in the succeeding verses. Let us trace these steps, and note to what extent we have taken them, and to what extent our experiences correspond to those which the Apostle delineates.

Our recovery did not begin with something in ourselves,—good resolutions, good works, etc. We did not improve ourselves, and thus commend ourselves to God: on the contrary, God was the prime mover in our release and recovery. He was inspired to give us aid by the benevolence of his character, for he is "rich in mercy." He is rich in all of his attributes, rich in wisdom, rich in justice, rich in power, rich in love; but it is with the attribute of love and its corresponding benevolence, or mercy that the Apostle is here dealing. How necessary it is for us to get this thought of God's richness of mercy well rooted and grounded in our hearts—that we may never doubt his generosity, his kindness, his sympathy, his mercy toward all those who desire and seek to know and to do his will! We need great faith in our heavenly Father, and it is only as we come to a clear knowledge of his glorious plan through the Word that we can exercise such a confidence in his love and mercy. The Adversary evidently desires that we should misunderstand our Creator, and, hence, has in every way possible sought to misrepresent his character and his plan.

The Apostle assures us that God had great love for us, even when we were dead in sins—when we were corrupt. It is difficult for us to think of God's greatness, purity and splendor of character, and of man's fallen condition—his corruption, mental, moral and physical—and then to understand how the holy Jehovah could have love for his fallen creatures. We may be sure that it was not the love of affection, such as he has for us now, as his sons, newly begotten of the spirit, but merely the love of sympathy. He beheld our miserable condition, and realized that an offer of release from our corruption, and of return to holiness and harmony with himself, would be joyfully appreciated and accepted by some —let us hope, by many;—and it was, undoubtedly, in view of such a response to his goodness and mercy that our Creator opened up for the world of mankind "a new way of life," in and through the Lord Jesus and his redemptive work.

But although this sympathetic love was toward the whole world, it has not yet been made generally known—it has not yet been practically exercised toward the world, but only toward a comparatively small proportion of the whole. Here and there the message has been sent to a special class—to those who have "an ear to hear"—the remainder being left for the present, to be dealt with later. (Isa. 35:5.) It is to those who had the "ear to hear," and who hearing, have responded and laid hold upon the grace of God in Christ, that the Apostle is now writing. He calls attention to the blessing of such an experience. He does not here differentiate between those who have taken merely the first step of faith and obedience unto **justification,** and those who have gone on and taken also the second step of **full consecration** to the Lord, "even unto death"; but addresses the latter class only—those who, having made a full consecration to the Lord of their justified selves, have been begotten of the spirit, quickened and energized by that spirit as members of the body of Christ. The Apostle here interjects in parenthesis (2:5) a reminder that all this blessing has come to us, not of our worthiness, nor of our work, but by divine "grace are ye saved"; we reached this position in the new life, this reckonedly saved position, by faith;—delivered from the sentence of sin, saved from the darkness and delusion of the Adversary, saved from the wrath of God, and brought, instead, into his loving favor. Oh, how great is the salvation which accompanies a complete conversion and full consecration to the Lord! What a wonderful change it brings to us, in thought, in word and in act! And yet this is only the beginning of our salvation, or what the Apostle elsewhere speaks of as being "saved by **hope.**" (Rom. 8:24.) While thus saved by grace now, we are still waiting for a further salvation, by grace—"for the grace [salvation] that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"—the First Resurrection.

All that, by the Lord's grace, we shall ultimately have through the "change" of the resurrection as members of the body of Christ—all the heavenly things, including full fellowship and communion with the Father and with our Lord—are reckoned as having their beginning in the present life. He, therefore, who knows not such a beginning of the new life, and its holy spirit now, has no reason whatever to believe that he has been begotten of the holy spirit—that he is a new creature in Christ. These new creatures are reckoned as having been raised up out of the state of sin and death into a new condition of life, and love of righteousness. Symbolically, they are ushered into the Holy of the Tabernacle, where they have the light of the Golden Lampstand, and partake of the spiritual Shewbread, and may offer the spiritual Incense to God, and have fellowship with him **"in Christ Jesus"**—as members of the **Ecclesia,** "the Church which is **his body.**" This is a figurative resurrection from the dead—a figure and earnest of the real resurrection from the dead which shall come to each of these if they prove loyal to God and faithful to their covenant as members of the body of Christ—to be dead with their Head, that they may also live with him, through participation in his resurrection.—Rom. 6:5, 8.

Counting the new life as beginning now—counting ourselves as members of the New Creation, which by and by is to be glorified, we ask ourselves with the Apostle, What great thing must God work, then, in us and for us, eventually, if present foretastes of his goodness and grace are so superlatively grand? The Apostle answers such a query (vs. 7) assuring us that "in the ages to come God will show forth the **exceeding riches of his grace through** [in] his kindness toward us [who are] in Christ Jesus." He does not attempt to tell us what these riches will amount to. He would have us see that God is rich in mercy, rich in grace, and rich in every other grand and estimable quality, and he would have us trust that so rich a Father will do for his adopted children "exceeding abundantly more than we could ask or think." Indeed, he assures us elsewhere that it is impossible for him to explain or for us to comprehend "the riches of our inheritance." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit."—1 Cor. 2:9, 10; Eph. 3:19.

Nevertheless, the revelation by his spirit is only an approximate one. We cannot clearly discern those unseen things, we cannot comprehend them with our finite natural minds. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be"; but with the new mind we can, even though but vaguely, grasp the thought of our Heavenly Father's riches of grace and love, and can draw analogies from the things of this present life, and thus gain some idea of the glorious things which await us. As we see our heavenly Father's provision for the natural man,—[illegible]le lower than the angels,—as we look at the beautiful flowers of earth, and taste of its delicious fruits, it is but another step for the consecrated heart to realize that the rich Father who planned so beneficently for his human sons, and who permits so many of these blessings to come to mankind, even in its fallen condition, is no less rich in love and mercy toward his spiritual sons, and will make abundant provision for them also. And that as he has provided harmonies of music for the natural ear, and pleasant odors and flavors and scenes for the senses of the natural man, so, only on a more exalted plane, there will be gratifications for all the high qualities of heart and of mind for the New Creation:—there will be what will correspond to the present beauties of nature, but higher and grander, for those who shall gain the new nature. There will be that which will correspond to the flowers and the birds, the fields and the trees, the mountains and the valleys. There will be that which will correspond to the most delightful gratifications of the eye, the ear, the nose and the mouth, and to the most pleasurable thrills of the heart. Thus does faith, based upon a knowledge of the riches of grace and love in our heavenly Father, enable the new creature to see the things invisible and to rejoice in the wonderful things only partially disclosed at the present time.

From this exalted position and favor and fellowship with God associated in the heavenlies in Christ, we are enabled by faith to rejoice in those promises of our Father's Word, which assure us that we shall be permitted to co-operate with him in the great work of the next age, the Millennial Age, in showing forth his praises, in lifting up so many as will of the world of mankind out of their present fallen condition,—up to full restitution of that which was lost in Adam and redeemed by Christ.

We notice (vss. 8-10) how carefully the Apostle seeks to guard us against the thought that any of these blessings have come to us on account of our own merit. He reiterates, "By grace are ye saved through faith." And if by grace, no longer of works, as he elsewhere points out. (Rom. 11:6.) If of works, it would not be of grace. As members of the fallen race we were incapable of doing any work which our holy God could accept—we were dead, corrupted, foul, under condemnation as children of wrath, when he had mercy upon us, and opened up the way of life. Our present standing, therefore, as new creatures, is not the result of anything that the old creature did, or could have done. It is not of ourselves; it is a gift of God. This lesson must be thoroughly appreciated, else we will be continually in danger of falling. The grace is not of ourselves, certainly, and we may say also that although **we exercised** some faith at the beginning (else we could never have come to him at all, to accept his favors), yet the faith by which we were enabled to accomplish our consecration even unto death, and thus to become new creatures in Christ, was not of ourselves—we had no such faith when God laid hold upon us. He developed in us that faith by the revelations of his love, through his promises, through his Word.

If our present standing were the result of our own efforts or "works," there would probably be some room for boasting;—it would imply that we were not so fallen that we could not have lifted ourselves out of the miry clay of sin,—on the line of the Evolution Theory. But such theories are not recognized in the divine Word and must not be recognized by any who would maintain their standing as new creatures **in Christ.** On the contrary, so far from considering the New Creature as an evolution of the old creature, the Apostle would have us understand distinctly that it is a new and separate creation. We were created in Christ Jesus, God's workmanship—prepared for good works, but not by good works.

The Apostle assures us that God foreordained that this New Creation should progress in good works. To become new creatures in Christ we gladly surrendered our all to the Lord, that we might know his will and do it; and having accepted us in Christ, he informs us that it is his good pleasure that our entire life should be renewed, that we should discard entirely from our hearts, our minds, our wills, everything sinful, everything unholy, and that so far as possible our mortal bodies should be brought into subjection to our new minds, and that we should walk in newness of life, even on this side the vail—thus giving evidence of our sincerity, developing character and becoming meet "for the inheritance of the saints in light," in glory. Whoever is not disposed to walk in the Lord's ways of holiness and opposition to sin, and in cultivation of the mind, the spirit of the Lord, the holy spirit, surely deceives himself, if he thinks he has passed from death unto life, and that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus.—Z. '03:88-91.

Some Precious Promises for Zion's Comfort

THE Christian has many perplexing questions to decide and is many times unable to decide the same without aid. To such the Lord has said:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

As the stress upon the world grows, the trials of the Christian increase; but when he understands the purpose of these trials he rejoices. To such the Apostle says:

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1 Peter 1:7.

The Christian finds that to perform his duties, striving to fulfil the terms of his commission, or warrant of authority, consumes his strength and energy and brings persecution upon himself (for he is misunderstood); and for the comfort of such the Lord declares:

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." "Fear not them that are able to kill the body."—Psalm 116:15; Matthew 10:28.

The Christian has many experiences that are difficult for him to understand, but the Lord sends us the Word of Cheer through His "chosen vessel":

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."—Romans 8:28.

The Christian, beholding so many dangers upon every side, might quail before his hosts of enemies, fearing violence or other injury; but for his comfort our God has said:

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."—Psalm 34:7.

The Christian realizes that his enemies are legion; that he is not warring merely against flesh and blood, but against evil spirits, the agencies of the Adversary, entrenched in high places. He realizes his inability to meet his enemies alone. For his assurance and strength, and for his comfort of mind and heart, the Lord has said to him:

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show His strength in behalf of them whose hearts are perfect toward Him."—2 Chronicles 16:9.

Again the child of God hears the Lord saying to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee."—2 Corinthians 12:9.

The Christian suffers many afflictions. He realizes the truthfulness of the statement that "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." But he hears the reassuring words of comfort:

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Corinthians 4:17.

Men of the world seek the glory which is as a fading flower; but the Christian has the promise of a glory and honor which far exceeds anything the world can give, and which no one of earth may know—a glory which is eternal.

The Christian recognizes in these strenuous times that upon every side are strife and dissension, trouble and war. He keenly realizes that under such conditions a faithful and loyal performance of his commission, or authority, of necessity must bring persecution upon him; but for his consolation and reassurance the Master says to him:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven."—Matthew 5:10-12.

The Lord has been selecting those who are willing to undergo hardships, misunderstandings and persecutions for His sake. He foreknew the great difficulties that the followers of the Master would have, and for the encouragement and comfort of such He keeps before the mind of the Christian the promised blessings and rewards that shall be granted to the faithful, saying:

"For Zion's (God's chosen people) sake will I not hold My peace, and I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all the kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name which the Lord shall name! Thou shalt be a Crown of Glory in the hand of the Lord, and a Royal Diadem in the hand of thy God.—Isaiah 62:1-3; Z. '17:148, 149.

Peter Delivered From Prison

Acts 12:5-17.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psa. 34:7.

FOLLOWING the history of the early Church, we now come upon another period of persecution. The former persecution seems to have passed by the principal ones of the Church entirely. It manifested itself against ordinary believers rather than against the apostles and public ministers. The result was the spread of the gospel by those who were "scattered abroad everywhere." The persecution now considered was directed against the apostles. Both persecutions were from the adversary and his faithful, but were such only as God saw best to permit, and such as would work out some good in connection with his plan.

During the reign of the Roman Emperor Caligula the Jews were kept in a considerable ferment by reason of his repeated attempt to have his statue set up in the temple, with altars for the worship of himself. While the Jews were so busy in defending their own religious liberties, the infant Christian Church was left comparatively unmolested; but now Caligula was dead, and a very different personage was his successor, and the Jews having a respite from troubles of their own, had good opportunity to cultivate their animosity against the followers of the Nazarene. King Herod Agrippa, having been obliged to co-operate with the Emperor's plans, had made himself more or less obnoxious to his subjects, the Jews; and he now sought to conciliate them, by persecuting the Christians. This Herod Agrippa was a worthy successor to his uncle, who had murdered John the Baptist, and to his grandfather, Herod the Great, who murdered the infants at

Bethlehem. His first object was personal aggrandizement and the perpetuation of his own family in the kingdom. His public acts, on the one hand, were intended to continue him in favor with the Emperor at Rome, and on the other hand, to gain as much favor as possible from the people whom he ruled as king,—as representative of the Emperor.

The persecution began with the killing of the Apostle James. Seeing that thereby he gained the favor of the Jews, Herod thought it the cheapest method by which to regain popularity with his subjects and proceeded to take Peter also. What a sad blow this must have been to the early Church! James and Peter were apparently the principal leaders in the affairs of the Church at Jerusalem, as they two with John, the brother of James, were the most prominent amongst the apostles while our Lord lived. We can imagine the consternation—James already dead, Peter seized and imprisoned and his execution held over merely because it was the week of Passover, and because according to Jewish custom no one could be put to death during that week. The manifest, if not declared, intention of Herod was that Peter should be killed in some manner immediately after the close of the Passover week. Here we pause to notice a strange commingling of religious formalism with the spirit of murder: the spirit of murder was in Herod and in the Jews, yet both for the time restrained themselves in order to symbolize by the Passover ceremonial a cleansing of the heart and life, a purification toward God. There is a lesson here (for all who will take it) to be on guard lest the outward and formal observances be an utter contradiction of the real condition of the heart. While obedience to the Lord in outward observances is eminently proper, it is still more important that the thoughts be pure and good.

By this time the number of Christians in Jerusalem was evidently considerable, notwithstanding the number that had emigrated on account of persecution; and it does not at all surprise us that we are informed that these everywhere were praying to God on Peter's behalf. There were evidently no church buildings in use by the Christians up to this time: they gathered in convenient places, and quite probably there were several of these in Jerusalem. The earnestness of these prayers is evidenced by the fact that they were kept up **all night**, and evidently for the **entire week** of Peter's imprisonment: for he was not delivered until the very last night, and, when delivered, it was some time in the "fourth watch," which began at three o'clock in the morning, and he was knocking at the "gate" of Mary's home, where prayer was being made, before sunrise.—Verse 13.

We cannot know just why the Lord permitted the death of James and spared the life of Peter; yet, doubtless, both events exercised a beneficial influence upon the Church. Possibly, indeed, there may have been growing in the Church a lack of appreciation of these apostles whom the Lord had so highly honored as his mouthpieces and channels for blessing the Church. The martyrdom of one would cause his loss to be seriously realized, the imprisonment of the other would and did draw forth the sympathy, love and appreciation of the whole company; and after they had prayed so earnestly for his deliverance, we may be sure that Peter was more than ever beloved by the Lord's flock. At all events, the death of one and the sparing of the other, we may be sure, were parts of the all things that worked together for good to those who loved the Lord.

Meantime, Peter had been delivered to four quaternions of soldiers (**i.e.,** four relief guards of four soldiers each): two of these watched in the outer courts of the prison, while two of them were chained to Peter in the cell. Thus, seemingly, every precaution had been taken against his escape. He had been delivered once before from the prison into which he had been thrust by the Sanhedrin, but now he was under military guard, probably in the Tower of Antonio, and chained to soldiers who knew that under Roman usage his escape would mean their death. The entire week had been spent in prayer on his behalf, yet the Lord had not delivered him, and each day seemed to add to the earnestness of the prayers, and to the necessity for the deliverance; yet knowing the circumstance it was difficult to judge in which way the Lord's providence would be interposed on Peter's behalf, if at all. Since the Lord had seen best to permit the death of James, they must have reasoned that they could not be at all certain that Peter would be delivered from death. How great and how far-reaching were the blessings of that week of trial and of prayer, of drawing near to the Lord and of realization of complete dependence upon him, we may surmise. The Lord was pleased in his providence to spare Peter to the Church, but he was also evidently pleased to be inquired of by the Church on this subject.

However, even on the last night of his imprisonment, though he expected that the next morning Herod would call for him to deliver him up to death, notwithstanding all this, "Peter slept." His noble, courageous heart was fixed upon the Lord, he trusted in divine wisdom and divine power and divine love, and was assured that nothing would be permitted to happen that would not be in some manner overruled for good. Hence, committing his all to the Lord, he was able to rest sweetly in sleep. Here was the appropriate order of things: the one directly involved so sweetly resting in the Lord's grace and love that he was free from trouble and fear, while the Church in general, though not so directly and personally concerned, were so full of loving interest on behalf of a brother that they prayed without ceasing day and night on his behalf. What they asked we are not told, but what they should ask under such circumstances we may well know from our Lord's own prayer (Matt. 26:39-42): whatever they asked, in propriety must have included the thought and the expression—Thy will, not ours, O Lord, be done.

When the angel awakened Peter, loosed his fetters, opened the strongly barred gates of the prison and brought him forth into the street, he left him, having accomplished his mission. Peter, amazed and bewildered, could scarcely realize at first whether it was a reality or a vision; but as he got his senses collected he comprehended that God had wrought for him another wonderful deliverance from the hands of his enemies—Herod and the Jews. But he neither went back to taunt the soldiers, nor was he filled with self-admiration and self-confidence, so as to shout his deliverance on the way; but considering the matter carefully he concluded that his proper course would be flight to some other city, as the Lord had directed, saying, "When they shall persecute you in one city flee to another." But as a true under-shepherd he had too deep an interest in the Lord's people who were so earnestly praying for him, to leave them without some explanation: so, going to the house of one of the friends of the cause, he communicated to them the fact of his release, sent word to the leaders of the cause in the city—"James, and the brethren"—and then fled to another place. This James was the brother of our Lord, while the James who had been killed was the Apostle, the brother of John. The fact that James and the prominent brethren were not at the house of Mary and her son John-Mark would seem to corroborate the thought that the meeting at the latter place was only one of many in Jerusalem.

The narrative of Peter's knocking at the door and the interruption of the prayer meeting, with the announcement of the answer of the prayers in a most remarkable manner, is all told with a beautiful simplicity, and indicates to us the loving spirit of fellowship and brotherhood which existed in the early Church.

The Golden Text carries a great lesson of its own in connection with Peter's deliverance. The Scriptures give us clearly to understand that the angels of God are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:14.) Very seldom have they been manifested to any as in this recorded instance; yet they are present as the representatives of the Lord to do any needed work for us according to his will. But we are to understand that the angel of the Lord was with James who was killed, as truly as with Peter who was delivered; and that the deliverance of God's people is not always such as can be appreciated by the natural senses. Sometimes the angel of the Lord is present with us and grants sustaining strength to endure a trial from which we are not delivered. Such was our Lord's case: we read that an angel appeared unto him and strengthened him. Such was probably the ministration of angels to James in his time of sore distress, when his life was yielded up to a murderer. Such also have been the experiences of many: the angel of the Lord has stood with them and has strengthened where he was not authorized to deliver. It is recorded that many Christian martyrs were so upheld and blessed, that even in the midst of persecution, torture and flames, they were able to sing praises to the Lord. It is related of Bishop Latimer that when bound to the stake he said to Bishop Ridley, speaking with great equanimity respecting his own suffering, "We shall light such a candle, by God's grace, in England this day, as I trust shall never be put out again."

How it enlarges the confidence of a Christian to realize that whilst earthly powers may be in opposition, and whilst he may be really of himself powerless to resist adversaries, and whilst in addition to the flesh and blood adversaries he may realize that he battles also with spiritual wickedness in exalted places—against Satan and his minions of darkness—yet that, on the other hand, "greater is he that is on our part than all that be against us," and that all the heavenly hosts are subject to the divine will and may be employed for the advancement of the divine cause according to divine wisdom.—Z. '97:118-120.

"Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon"

THIS lesson is on the subject of the impossibility of having two masters, God and Mammon. Mammon represents earthly riches, not only financial wealth, but honor amongst men, etc.—the thing which was particularly hindering the Pharisees from taking the proper course and acknowledging their error and seeking for and obtaining mercy. Mammon still is a great hindrance to all who desire to be the Lord's disciples. Whoever worships Mammon—and it may be self or wealth or fame or position and honor amongst men, one or all of these—whoever worships Mammon cannot at the same time be a true worshiper of God, a true follower of Christ; because God and Mammon are rivals before our hearts. If we attempt to divide our love and attention, and to give part of it to God and to his service, and part of it to Mammon, the results will be unsatisfactory to God, unsatisfactory to Mammon and unsatisfactory to ourselves.

We must, therefore, decide either to live for self and earthly things or to renounce and sacrifice these in the interest of God and of heavenly things. The worshipers of Mammon may have certain advantages as respects the present life, in the way of earthly prosperity, but Mammon cannot give eternal life. It is the gift of God, and those who would have God's gift must be God's friends, God's children; and he demands of such that they shall manifest their love and devotion to him by renouncing Mammon, by joyfully sacrificing earthly name and fame and favor and interest, thus showing their higher appreciation of his love and favor, the riches of his grace, and the exceeding great and precious things which he has promised to give them in the life to come.

These are to "make to themselves friends"; in other words, to lay up treasures in heaven, by the sacrifice of the Mammon of unrighteousness;—that is to say, the sacrifice of the various interests of this present time of unrighteousness, "this present evil world."

Some may have very little of Mammon at their disposal to sacrifice; but the Lord encourages us all by saying that he that is faithful in that which is least, thereby gives evidence of how faithful he would be if he had much; and the Lord accepts the little sacrifices which we are able to make as though they were greater ones. "She hath done what she could" is the best of testimony as respects the use of present opportunities in the Lord's service, whether it refer to a mite or a million, a little influence or a great one. It is not the **amount** that God is seeking, but the **character,** the **disposition of heart**; and whoever has the right disposition of heart and is careful in the small affairs of life, to serve the Lord with all that he possesses and to the extent of his ability, such an one will have committed to him the true riches—the heavenly riches. Not merely may be expect to enter into the glories of the heavenly Kingdom, but even in the present life he will begin to get a first-fruits of those riches in his own heart, in his own experiences; for it is unquestionably a fact that the heirs of glory, those who are in the right relationship with God and running faithfully in the race, not only will get the prize at the end of the race, but already get blessing which the world can neither give nor take away;—the joys of the Lord, the peace of God which passeth all understanding ruling in their hearts; so that they can sing for joy, even in the house of their pilgrimage—even in the present unsatisfactory tabernacle condition, in which we groan also, being burdened with its weaknesses.

But if we are not faithful in the little things which confessedly are not our own, and merely given to us as a stewardship—the things, the opportunities, the talents, which are merely put within our grasp as stewards of the Lord,—if we are not faithful in using these **with an eye single to the Lord's glory,** how can we expect that he will ever give us true riches of grace, to be our own forever, either in the future or in the present life.

The sum of this lesson to the disciples, then, is that as no man is able to serve two masters and satisfy both, and do justice to both, their interests conflicting, no more can we serve God and righteousness, and at the same time be pleasing and acceptable to the Adversary and those who are in harmony with him who now rules in this present dispensation, the "prince of this world." All of the Lord's consecrated people, those who would lay up treasures in heaven and be rich toward God, must be willing to become of no reputation amongst those who are not consecrated, and who, whatever their professions, are really serving Mammon, selfishness, the present life, and not sacrificing these interests to the attainment of the heavenly Kingdom.—Z. '00: 317, 318.

The Proper Kind of Table Talk

Luke 14:1-14.

EVERY Christian family should utilize the excellent opportunities afforded for social converse at meal-times. Not only does pleasant and profitable conversation assist digestion, and thus prove physically helpful, but, additionally, these regular family gatherings should be recognized as opportunities for mental profit and for growth in knowledge respecting both temporal and spiritual things. Particularly for the last fourteen years (prior to 1900) this has been the custom of the Bible House family at Allegheny,—and a very profitable one. Our topics are usually propounded in the question form, the privilege of questioning being open to all at the table. Answers to the questions are sought from each one present, thus stimulating thought and a proper expression of it, very helpful to all, as subsequently they may be called upon to answer such a question before others in public or in private. We commend the plan to all of our readers, suggesting that in such a gathering the one supposed to be most conversant with such matters reserve his reply for the last.

Where the family is composed wholly of "new creatures" the questions would properly differ some what in general character from what they would be if it were a mixed company: nevertheless, appropriate subjects should not be refused from anyone present; as, for instance, questions respecting table etiquette, good breeding, proper language, the events of the day that do not partake of the nature of gossip, etc. It is a shame that Christian people, even in the humblest walks of life, and when perhaps surrounded by poverty, have no thought of what valuable opportunities are afforded at such times of breaking of bread—to break to their families mental or spiritual food also, strengthening and elevating.

In proportion as Christian people realize their privileges and duties in such matters they will find that coarseness and rudeness at the table will disappear, refinement and intellectuality gradually displacing them. And one of the features most conducive to true table etiquette, and the drawing together of hearts and minds in true fellowship and intellectual enjoyment at the times of physical repast, will be found to be the giving of thanks to God—the recognition that every good and every perfect gift cometh down from our Father. The family which at table neglects to return acknowledgement to the Giver of every good, will scarcely succeed in properly recognizing each other and having intellectual fellowship one with the other.

That our Lord was prompt to avail himself of all such table-talk opportunities, is very manifest. On each occasion of his attendance at a banquet we find him utilizing the opportunity for the inculcation of some truth—natural or spiritual. In the present instance he evidently did not consider his hearers to be in a favorable condition for high spiritual teachings, and hence his table-talk was on a lower plane, adapted to the natural man, yet nevertheless inculcating lessons which, if learned, would prepare the learners for the heavenly things. And this should be the thought in every family circle,—that the tendency of all conversation should be ennobling as well as instructive—leading upward as well as outward.

The guests had been invited to the table, and our Lord noticed how they were each seeking the seats of chief honor, thus showing the pride and ambition of their hearts. We may safely assume that our Lord and his disciples took the less distinguished seats, in harmony with the Scriptural injunction, "In honor preferring one another."

A favorable opportunity offering, our Lord indirectly called attention to the wrong self-seeking course,—not by saying anything against the action in this particular case, but by suggesting a propriety of conduct in a general way; he based his illustration upon a marriage feast, at which, more than any other, distinctions as to title, honor and position, received much consideration. As was his custom, he taught by a parable, permitting his hearers to draw the inference and make the application in some measure to the banquet to which they were then gathered; and he wound it up by making this a great lesson on a general principle: viz., that "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted,"—a lesson of vital importance to all who would be ready for and enter the Kingdom.

This is a great lesson applicable, not only to the natural man, seeking progress back to fellowship and harmony with God, but there is in it also a lesson to the "new creature" all through life's journey,—that if divine favor is desired and to be expected it must be sought: not in pride, not in self-sufficiency, but in humility. The Lord resisteth the proud, the self-sufficient, the boastful, and showeth his favors unto the humble. The Apostle James likewise calls attention to the importance of this grace of humility, assuring us that no true progress can be made in the way to God, except by the humble. (James 4:10.) And the Apostle Peter, after exhorting to humility, saying, "Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility," adds, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—1 Pet. 5:5, 6.

If the hearers had received the message and been corrected by it, it might indeed have worked considerable difference in their standing amongst their brethren, the Pharisees, but it would also have worked a considerable difference in their favor with God. By receiving such a spirit of humility they would be coming into that relationship with God and the truth which would have divine approval, and be thus the stepping-stone to further favor, by preparing their hearts to receive the good things which God has to give, but which cannot be received by any except the humble-hearted. Indeed, we know of nothing today that is so great a stumbling-block to the majority in nominal Christendom as the prevalent spirit of self-seeking. It is a great barrier before the minds of many, in and out of the pulpit, continually hindering them from seeing, hearing and obeying present truth—they love the approval of men rather than that of God.

The table-talk later turned in another direction, probably considerable being said in the interim that is not recorded, not pertinent: but before the feast was ended an appropriate opportunity came for the Lord to present some words of counsel to his host, and this was done in so kind and so wise a manner that it surely could give no offence, but, on the contrary, must have led the thoughts of all the hearers to higher and heavenly things. He advised that the banquets of the well-to-do in this world's goods be extended to their poorer, less fortunate neighbors and friends; assuring his hearers that such a course would bring the greatest blessing, as every good deed brings its blessings, forthwith—in the consciousness of having done good: and in the reactionary effect upon one's own heart of every good deed, every benevolence. And, in addition to these blessings, our Lord pointed out that for such an one there would be a blessing in the future also—a reward that would fully compensate every such benefaction.

Our Lord's words were in part a commendation of the course pursued by his host in inviting himself and his apostles to dinner, for they were poor. Indirectly his remarks meant that if that very feast were given with a proper sentiment of heart, as we have every reason to presume was the case, his host might expect a reward for his conduct in the future—besides the blessing that had already come to his house through our Lord's presence and words of instruction.—Z. '00: 284, 285.

Christ Jesus—Our Illustrious Example

"Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
—Hebrews 12:3.

THE Apostle's argument in our text is that the Lord's people need to be of good courage, need to remember that they have enlisted in a war on the side of righteousness and against sin, and that the enlistment is for life. The condition of their acceptance by the Lord was to this effect: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the Crown of Life."—Revelation 2:10.

In the Apostle's day, as in our day, there was a tendency on the part of some to espouse the Cause of the Lord and to run faithfully for a while, and then to become discouraged, disheartened, and turn away to something else. In a previous chapter the Apostle has pointed out that some of those whom he was addressing had been faithful and courageous for a time, had "endured a great fight of afflictions," and then had become as babes, requiring milk, and needed to be taught again by others what were the first principles of the doctrines of Christ. They seemed to have lost their zeal to a large extent, and to have become discouraged in some way. They were not alert as servants of the Truth. and as servants of the Lord. as at first. They had permitted the opposition to wear down greatly their zeal and energy.

In Chapter 11 of this Epistle. the Apostle calls attention to the fact that all through the past there had been noble witnesses to God and His Cause. to whom the Church might well look as patterns of faithful endurance of opposition. and from whose course they might take encouragement. He cites the case of Abraham and his faith in God's promises. He recounts many of those who had endured great sufferings and privations. and were exiles from home—some of whom were even stoned to death or sawn asunder. etc.. "of whom the world was not worthy." These were to be considered by the Church of Christ as glorious examples of faithfulness. And now. in our text. the Apostle brings us down to the grandest example of faithfulness to God ever known—our Lord Jesus Christ—and says that we should all especially consider **Him** who endured so much.

The word "consider" is here used in the sense of study. appreciate. take knowledge of. The more we study our Lord's course in life and realize what it cost Him to be faithful to the Father. to the principles of righteousness and truth. the more we see the exaltation of His character. He loved not His life. He withheld nothing. in order that He might do the will of the Father. He made no effort to be sensational. that thus He might attract attention to Himself: but humbly. quietly. went about His Father's business.

Religious Teachers Christ's Chief Opponents

Our Lord Jesus was loyal to the principles of righteousness as expressed in the Law and the Prophets. "In His mouth was found no guile"—no deception. No one found in Him an attempt to curry favor with the multitude by saying something that would please the ear. and yet not be true. We find that He was absolutely faithful to God's Law. When the matter came up as to how this Law should be interpreted. He would give full. plain instruction respecting it. holding nothing back. He was loyal to the Heavenly Father in that He never claimed that anything He said or did was of Himself. but declared that it all came from the "Father who sent Him." He was loyal to the Father and to the Truth in everything. This loyalty brought Him much of opposition: for when He said that He was the Son of God. of "the Father who sent Him." the Jews were angry. "If you. a mere man. make yourself the Son of God," they said. "you are putting yourself on an equality with God. We never claim anything of this kind. We are the children of Abraham." Then they charged that He was fraudulent; whereas He was speaking the plain truth.—John 10:31-39; 8:39.

Thus the opposition to our Lord began—contradiction, as it is called in our text. There was opposition to Him in proportion as He presented the Truth. As the Jewish leaders began to see that the Message Jesus proclaimed was contrary to the one that they had given, or that they had received, antagonism sprang up. He did not make as many disciples as might have been expected, considering that "never man spake like this man." There were only something over five hundred of His followers altogether in the three and one-half years of His ministry. Five hundred seemed a small number from amongst the one nation that had been expecting the Messiah for over sixteen hundred years!

We inquire. How did the Master receive the opposition. the contradiction of sinners. and who were the sinners? The answer is. He received the contradiction with meekness and self-possession. The sinners were those of the Jewish people who. having a measure of light. were not obedient to that light. The Apostle does not wish us to consider how the **Gentiles** failed to receive the Lord. for He did not come to the Gentiles. His preaching was simply to the one nation to whom God had especially manifested Himself. and for whom were the promises and the first opportunity to become heirs to those promises.

We note that these sinners were chiefly found amongst the learned Jews—the scribes. chief priests. Pharisees and Doctors of the Law. These. having knowledge. having experience. knowing the Law. failed to appreciate the spirit of the Law. and were out of accord with it. Therefore to that extent they were sinners. The teachings of Jesus manifested this fact and led them to take their side with positiveness. In taking sides against Him they were taking sides against much that they recognized and knew to be right.

We perceive that the Master met the attacks of His enemies with gentleness. kindness. yet with logic—not sentencing them to eternal torment—no suggestion of the kind. He knew that they were largely blinded. He said to His disciples. "Blessed are **your eyes,** for they **see**. and your **ears,** for they **hear,"** thus intimating that the great majority of the nation were blind and dull of hearing. They were not in a condition to receive His Message, and Jesus knew that they would need more experiences before they would be ready. We see that they got these experiences afterwards. in the great time of trouble. which doubtless made many of them think more seriously of what Jesus had said.

The numbers who came to the Lord on the day of Pentecost are to be accounted for by the fact that at this particular Feast. the Feast of Harvest. the most religious Jews. the most honest Jews from all over the world gathered at Jerusalem. On this occasion when the Apostle Peter preached the Gospel. many of these Jews for the first time, perhaps, heard about Jesus in any definite way.

No Compromise With Error

The Apostle urges us that as Jesus endured all these things and they did not change His course or purpose. so should we endure steadfastly. He remained loyal to the principles of righteousness; He did not swerve; He did not attempt to come down to meet the demands of the Pharisees and say, "I will put on phylacteries. I will be a Pharisee; and if you will support Me, we shall get along nicely together." No. He endured their opposition. Let them oppose as much as they would, He would not alter His course from that which was right, loyal to God, loyal to the Truth. He would even denounce the Pharisees as a class when necessary, to show them how much in them was hypocrisy, thereby to awaken some to a realization of what they were doing, in order that they might be benefitted thereby, and also to show the people that they should not be bound to leaders who were hypocritical.

This was Jesus' course. The Apostle urges us that we should consider Him and His course, His patience in dealing with opposition. The opposition that He dealt with led Him to death. St. Paul adds, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Jesus did resist unto blood—unto death.

As we consider our Lord, then, and see how faithful He was to every principle of righteousness, even unto death, although His faithfulness cost Him His life, it should make us very appreciative, very courageous; for we have no such great opposition of sinners as Jesus had. We have indeed some opposition—sometimes in the family, in the home, in the Church—wherein we need to stand up for principle for truth, but our enemies have not the power to give us the persecution that Jesus endured.

Considering all this, we may feel that, comparatively speaking, "our lines have fallen to us in pleasant places." We have comparatively little to suffer for righteousness' sake. . . . We should, indeed, while not courting opposition and persecution, be very ready to receive these and to appreciate them as an indication that we are on God's side; for these we are to expect. The Apostle Paul assures us that "whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12); and the Master intimates that this persecution will come largely from those who profess to be God's people. If we have more of this to meet later on than we have yet received, let us be strong and courageous, looking ever to Him who is our great Exemplar.—Z. '17: 37, 38.

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We concede that we are unable to read the heart; but we are fully satisfied to accept the Divine decision in such matters and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present life shall be disclosed we shall then be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now. We shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those whom the Lord accepted and the hearts of those, outwardly humble, whom He did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept His decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when He said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Instructed respecting the Divine methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom He seems to give the anointing of His Spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, ... we are to rejoice especially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. ("The Lord knoweth them that are His.") ; and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to co-operate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Often have we thought, as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord's people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well educated or refined, some ignoble—but nevertheless bearing the marks of the anointing of the Lord, the light of the Truth shining in their faces, the confidence and hope of the Truth inspiring them, and their lives indicating a transformation from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son—often have we thought that had the Lord sent us forth to seek His Bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of His choice jewels and have gathered in some whom He rejects as unworthy—because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord.—Z. '15: 89.

◆

Of this thing we may be sure, that, however many of the Lord's people are by nature "chiefly the mean things of this world and the things that are naught," nevertheless if they become copies of God's dear Son, they will lose the meanness from their hearts and instead will be partakers of his grace, his spirit, his holiness.—Z. '09: 25.

◆

"Those who accept the ministry, or service, of the Church as Elder Brothers under the Divine regulation should realize that they have assumed a weighty responsibility, respecting which they must give an account to God." This does not mean faultfinding with the brethren. It does not mean merely preaching to them, nor merely visiting the sick and counseling the troubled. It means a spiritual oversight, a care of all the interests of both the congregation and the individuals composing it. Those who are overcharged with the cares of this life are not in a condition, in any sense of the word, to accept the responsibilities of this service in the Church of the living God. Only those who seek first the interests of the Lord's Kingdom and the righteousness which it inculcates are in any sense or degree properly suited to such service in the Church.—Z. '16: 235.

◆

As Moses purified the waters of Marah, so our still mightier Leader can make our bitter experiences sweet if we will but trust him. Then to us also comes a season of rest and refreshment, an Elim condition. The Lord does not permit us to have bitterness and trials continually, lest we should become thoroughly discouraged. He leads us sometimes by still waters, restoring our soul, refreshing and resting us in his grace, and these experiences rightly received and producing in us thankfulness and appreciation, tend to make us stronger for the further journey and lessons of the present life.—Z. '02 : 200.

◆

While thankful that we can call upon the Lord in every place and at any time, let us approach his courts with reverence, with an awe of heart befitting to us in our humble, lowly condition, and to him in his great exaltation. Thus we enter into the real spirit of prayer, which should recognize our complete dependence and the greatness of the Almighty. —Z. '08 : 43.

◆

The Son of Man indeed went to death, as it had been written of him, but this made none the less horrible the treachery, the covetousness and murderous spirit that delivered him up to his enemies. So with the members of the body of Christ; it must needs be that offences come—it is a part of the divine plan that the body of Christ should fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of the Head (Col. 1 : 24)—but this makes none the less sinful the conduct of those who have to do with such betrayals—especially if they be "false brethren" who have enjoyed some knowledge of the truth. In every instance, however, it will be observed that although the trials worked out blessing for the Lord and will do so also for all the faithful who suffer with him, the rewards of unrighteousness sought by those who take Judas' course never yield them the honors and blessings they coveted, and for which they sold themselves to work evil.—Z. '99 :119.

◆

The lesson of trusting to the Lord's vigilance in minding his business and the lesson that each Israelite indeed should mind his own business, are still closely identified.—Z. '02 : 250.

◆

Our blessings increase in value and in efficacy and in the joys they bring to us in proportion as we recognize that they come from above. Let us then more and more—in all the little affairs of life as well as in the great—look to the Lord for his blessing and guidance, and give him thanks and acknowledgement as we perceive his hand in our affairs. So doing we learn to trust him more, and to have blessing ourselves as well as become blessings to others.—Z. '07 : 74.

◆

Do I love instruction and knowledge? am I seeking for it daily in the line of God's Word and providences? and am I ready to consider and heed reproof rather than to spurn and resent it? Are the purposes of my heart all pure and upright, bringing with them a constant sense of the Lord's favor? Am I rooted and grounded in the principles of righteousness, so that I will not swerve and cannot be moved?—Z. '93 :126.

◆

Should the temptation ever come to you, to seek to show your wisdom by magnifying a minor difference between yourself and another of the Lord's servants, reject the thought as a temptation from the devil, and do the very reverse;—minimize differences, and endeavor to mind the same things and to be of one mind and one spirit with all who love the Lord.—1 Cor. 1 :10 ; Z. '93 :169.

◆

Those who have "thus learned Christ," he has taught the meaning of (1) **perfected love toward God,** which would prompt them to do and to dare anything in his service ; (2) of **perfected love for the "brethren,"** which would prompt the laying down of life itself in their service ; (3) of **perfected love for the world, yea, even for enemies,** which would lead to do good to them that hate us and despitefully use us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely.

Alas! we cannot suppose that many of the consecrated have reached this standard or mark ; hence we must expect that few have graduated as "fit for the Kingdom" ; hence also the intimation of Scripture that the left-overs—non-graduates—will be "a Great Company" as compared with the Little Flock of overcomers who do attain to the mark, the fixed standard.—Z. '08 : 87.

◆

A parrot can repeat certain words and phrases ; but no one would accuse a parrot of being spiritually-minded. So there are some people who can repeat certain spiritual truths, apparently with a good deal of zest.

To be spiritually-minded is to have a mind in harmony with the Spirit of God, and fully surrendered to the Divine will—fully consecrated to the Lord. It would not be enough merely to have a preference for good, saying, "I prefer not to do any gross sins ; I prefer to live a life that will be honest and decent. This attitude would not be spiritual-mindedness. Adam was not spiritually-minded, but in his perfection he had a mind to do right. He had the mind of God in the sense that he had a balanced mind, not one having a preference for sin, or one that was weak. He was sound-minded and could appreciate things from the standpoint of righteousness and justice. But even in his perfection Adam had not a spiritual mind, in the highest, or Scriptural sense of the word.—Z. '12 : 49.

◆

OUR GREAT WORK is in connection with the future glorified Temple of God, (a) to co-operate with God in his work of grace in our own hearts, by which we are being fitted and prepared for a place in the Temple of his glory, and (b) to assist others, both by precept and example, for places in the same. Like Solomon's typical temple, this great Temple will shortly come together "without the sound of a hammer," every part fitting to its place perfectly. Then, shortly, the glory of the Lord will fill the temple ; "then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father," then in and through this glorious Temple all the world of mankind shall be privileged to draw near to God, for forgiveness of sins and for reconciliation through the precious blood of Christ, and the great work of the Millennium will begin—the blessing of all the families of the earth through the "elect," the "royal priesthood."—Z. '98 : 294.

◆

We do not think it probable that all the living faithful will die and be "changed" together.—Z. '96 :141.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY

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The Secret of the Saints

"To play through life a perfect part,
  Unnoticed and unknown:
To seek no rest in any heart
  Save only God's alone:
In little things to own no will,
  To have no share in great:
To find the labor ready still,
  And for the crown to wait.

"Upon the brow to bear no trace
  Of more than common care:
To write no secret in the face
  For men to read it there:
The daily cross to clasp and bless
  With such familiar zeal
As hides from all that not the less
  The daily weight you feel.

"In toils that praise will never pay
  To see your life go past:
To meet in every coming day
  Twin sister of the last;
To hear of high heroic things,
  And yield them reverence due,
But feel life's daily offerings
  Are far more fit for you.

"To woo no secret soft disguise,
  To which self-love is prone:
Unnoticed by all other eyes,
  Unworthy in your own:
To yield with such a happy art
  That no one thinks you care,
And say to your poor bleeding heart,
  How little you can bear.

"Oh! 'tis a pathway hard to choose,
  A struggle hard to share,
For human pride would still refuse
  The nameless trials there;
But since we know the gate is low
  That leads to heavenly bliss,
What higher grace could God bestow
  Than such a life as this."—Z. '86, Aug. 3.

Aspirations

I wish I were as pure, as fair to view,
As yonder blossom, sparkling with the dew;
But then I could not wear my snowy dress,
The Savior's gift—his robe of righteousness.

I wish I were like mountains, towering high,
Strong and majestic, piercing cloud and sky;
But then I could not feel my weakness thrill
With strength to do my blessed Master's will.

I wish my life were placid as yon lake,
Unmoved by storms that o'er the ocean break;
But could I realize such rest and peace
As when the Master bids my troubles cease?

Lord, all my wishes, all my heart's desires
Find consummation when the world retires,
And Thou before my raptured gaze dost stand,
In perfectness complete, a pattern grand.

Ah! would I were, my blessed Lord, like thee!
Then should my heart thy fragrant garden be!
Then should my prayers past mountain tops ascend,
My peace be fathomless, my joy attained.

For Thee leapt high the sacrificial fire,
Let it of me my cleansed parts require!
Into Thy nostrils let the incense rise,
A token of accepted sacrifice!—Z. '99: 44.

CONVENTION

A Central Eastern Convention has been arranged to be held at Richfield, Wis., on March 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, 1921, at which Brothers Palmer, Zinck and Edwards will serve. As it is not possible to arrange a series of Eastern Conventions at this time, the friends are urged to make a special effort to be at Richfield. We understand that a few of the friends at the coast are expecting to be present.

For further information about this convention please apply to Brother Wm. Dhein, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

The true Church has never been divided, because each member of it is united with the Lord, the Head, and, through him, united to every other "member of his Body, which is the Church," the "Little Flock." In this one Church, there has always been maintained one Lord Jesus, one faith, his Word of promise, one baptism—the baptism of consecration into his death—to suffer with him that, by and by, we may reign with him.—Z. '11: 38.

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It is well for us to note how little we know at best.—Z. '08: 59.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER FIFTY

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Righteous Reproof and Forgiveness of Wrong

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."—Psa. 141:5.

IN THE SCRIPTURES the word righteous is used in a two-fold sense. In one sense, absolute righteousness is referred to, as when we read, "There is none righteous, no, not one." In the text under consideration the intimation is given that our Lord Jesus is the Righteous One who smites. In this sense, of course, the chastisements would come from our Lord; and the one chastised would receive them with appreciation, knowing that the Wisdom, Justice and Love of God are connected with such reproof. But there is a secondary use of the word righteous, applying to mankind. Various persons are spoken of in the Scriptures as being righteous, not because they were perfect, but because they were right-intentioned, right-willed, and manifested in their conduct the Spirit of God, the spirit of righteousness.

In this use of the word righteous, the text seems to imply that all who are the Lord's people should be able to give reproof and correction in righteousness in a manner that would be helpful to those corrected, and for their good; in a way that would bring a measure of comfort and blessing and refreshment; in a manner that would be like excellent or fragrant oil, whose perfume would linger for hours. With this thought before our minds, there is a valuable lesson here. First of all, we should be of those who receive the corrections as of the Lord; and who are glad to be set right if we are wrong in any manner; secondly, we should be of those who recognize that if reproof be proper to give, it should be of a kind that would not be injurious, but such as would be spiritual, uplifting and refreshing.

In order to accomplish this end a reproof should be sympathetic. We should remember that all of the Lord's people are fallen according to the flesh, but are New Creatures in Christ; and, if they be New Creatures in Christ, they must have the mind of the Lord and desire to glorify Him. Any of the brethren giving a reproof from this point of view would recognize that the person reproved had not bad intentions, and would explain as gently and kindly as possible what are the real facts. A reproof of this kind should not be given suddenly; and the person reproving should judge of the punishment to be given and of the proper time, etc., as of the Lord. Thus should any one that is righteous do in administering reproof to another. It should be done only after careful consideration and prayer, and after having arrived at the conclusion that this is the best possible way to help the brother or the sister. If all reproof were given under such conditions we may readily suppose that it would be much more helpful than is the usual reproof.

Crushing Reproof Is Unrighteous

The expression, it "shall not break my head," would mean that a reproof should not be disastrous, not be crushing, but it should be an anointing or blessing. To crush the head would be to kill the person. The righteous are not in the world for the purpose of doing injury to others or of harming them, but for doing good in the world. Those who injure others are to that extent unrighteous. Those who use their criticism and reproof, etc., so as to exercise a crushing effect upon the reproved are not righteous. Such should learn how to properly administer criticism. They should learn that the Apostle's statement, "reprove," "rebuke," etc., was not made to all of God's people, but to Timothy, who was an Elder. And only those should be chosen as Elders who are men of moderation, [illegible] of development, men who have learned to control their own lives and their own tongues, so that they would not crush, but that their rebuke would be helpful and intended to draw the person nearer to the Lord, and to be encouraging and helpful generally.

"Rebuke Not An Elder"

When St. Paul instructed Timothy not to rebuke an Elder, but to entreat him as a father, the Apostle did not refer to an Elder of the congregation, but a person older than one's self. Do not rebuke a person older than yourself. Treat him as a father; likewise the elder women as mothers; and the younger men as brothers, and the younger women as sisters. In other words, an Elder is not appointed in the Church to brow-beat or to trample down the liberties of others. The spirit of kindness, gentleness, etc., is the Holy Spirit. If an Elder rebukes in another spirit than this, he should remember that the person rebuked is not a child and should not be treated as a child—not reprimanded or denounced or told "This is all wrong!" Such an unwise course in administering a rebuke is a fruitful cause of difficulty.

It would not be wise or kind to lose patience with older people whom he feels should know about a matter and to say, "You ought to know all about this. I will give you a lesson." This kind of spirit has made difficulty in various places. Apparently the Apostle's remark is to the opposite of this course of conduct, and exhorts to kindness, gentleness, consideration of age and everything that might enter into the matter. It is very evident from different Scriptures that there was a family sympathy in olden times that we do not see exemplified today, as shown in the Apostle's statement: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters."—1 Tim. 5:1, 2.

Today it is the custom to be very polite toward strangers and very impolite toward those of one's own family; and some will be very polite amongst those who are outside and very impolite to those to whom they ought to give kindness and help and sympathy. The same thought seems to be given in connection with the admonition to "love as brethren." But today, if you want to find true, real friends, you do not often look for them in the same family. In this respect our progress has surely not been of the evolutionary kind. Father, mother, brothers and sisters should be treated with consideration, with kindness, with love. And this principle should be applied to the household of faith.

"Love Worketh No Ill to His Neighbor"

In 2 Tim. 4:2 the Apostle, as a minister of the grace of God, explains that the declaration of the Gospel may include three features: (1) reproof; (2) rebuke; (3) exhortation. But it is safe to caution all of the Lord's people against too liberal use of the first two features. In order to reprove properly, the heart should be very full of love and sympathy; else the reproofs and rebukes might be sharp and possibly do more harm than good. Even with the heart full of love, it requires a head that is exceedingly well balanced to be able to make use of reproofs and rebukes to good advantage to those who really need them. And herein God's people are to be "wise as serpents, harmless as doves." Exhortation is the form of service which quite evidently can best be used by the majority of the Lord's people. And even this form, as well as the other efforts, should be characterized by patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness.

When Forgiveness Is Proper

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him: And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." —Luke 17:3, 4.

God does not forgive our sins until we acknowledge them and ask His forgiveness. Our Lord expressly states the propriety of expecting those who trespass against us to make some acknowledgment of their fault before we express our full forgiveness. If he "turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."

We are not to accept one portion of the Divine direction and to ignore another portion. We are not to say that our Lord meant it when He said, "Forgive him," and that He did not mean it when He said, "Rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." With the majority of people, however, it would be quite unnecessary to urge the propriety of repentance—unless they were the transgressors whose duty it is to repent. Most people are sufficiently disinclined to forgive to wait until their forgiveness is asked.

We Should Live Above Trifles

On the other side of the question, however, a caution is necessary. The Christian is to have the loving, generous disposition of heart, a copy of the Heavenly Father's disposition. In trivial affairs he is to have so much sympathy and love that he will take no notice of the little wrongs, just as God for Christ's sake deals with us, unless it represents knowledge and wilfulness. Such a rule operating amongst Christians—a determination not to recognize as offense anything that is not purposely done or intended as an offense—would be a great blessing to all, and the proper, God-like course. The transgressions to which our Lord refers are **not trivial affairs,** things of no consequence, are not evil surmisings or imaginings, are not fancied insults, **but positive wrongs done us,** which are susceptible of proofs and on account of which it is our duty, kindly and lovingly and wisely, to give some proper rebuke —some intimation that we recognize the wrong and that it has grieved us and hurt us. Then comes the Divine rule respecting the one and only proper manner of rebuke given by our Lord (Matt. 18:15-17) and more than once elaborated in this journal. Our Lord intimates that disobedience of His commands evidences a lack in discipleship. Though He gave very few specific commandments, this command which He carefully marked out as the one, only way of adjusting a grievance, is utterly ignored by many advanced Christians.

"Even as Christ Forgave You"

The disposition to forgive should be with us always, and should be manifested by us at all times.

Our loving generosity and kindness and desire to think no evil—or as little as possible—should be shown in all the words and acts of life. This course is God-like. God had a kind, benevolent, generous sentiment toward us, even while we were yet sinners. Nor did He wait for the sinners to ask forgiveness, but promptly manifested His desire for harmony and His readiness to forgive. The whole Gospel message is to this effect: "Be ye reconciled to God." Our hearts should be so full of this disposition toward forgiveness that our faces would not have a hard look, nor our words of reproof a bitter sting. On the contrary, they should manifest the loving forgiveness that we should have in our hearts at all times.

Our Lord particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness is only lip-deep, and means that a rankling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will be only a matter of time until the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart, and, whatever the lip-professions may be, He will not consider these unless the heart and the life correspond with them. It is vain, therefore, that anyone should say, "I love my brother," and at the same time seek, either by word or act, to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceed from evil in the heart; hence the necessity, on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord's Body, that they "purge out the old leaven of malice" that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf—the Body of Christ.

Forgiveness "in your hearts" is the condition which is always to obtain there. We should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good-will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us. If this be the case, we shall be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence we shall not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent; but, like the father of the prodigal, to see the repentant one coming in an attitude of humility will touch our hearts and prompt us to go out part way to meet him, to forgive him, to greet him kindly and to put on the robe of fullest fellowship and brotherhood.

"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—Matt. 6:15.

Hate the Sin, But Not the Sinner

Our earliest definition of "Injure not" would probably have been that we should not kill or wound our enemies physically; but as we look at the Teacher and heed His words we hear Him say, "Learn of Me," and we note with the Apostle that though He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, yet, "When He was reviled He reviled not again [in return]; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously."—1 Pet. 2:22, 23.

If we are faithful pupils it will not be long until we see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discerner of the very thoughts and intents of the heart; and that while we must hate all sin, we cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in our hearts. We see that this means, not only that we must not retaliate and revile our foes, but that **we must not even wish to do so.** The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love—the Spirit of Christ.

"Copies of God's Dear Son"

We may learn a lesson from the fact that those two grand characters, John the Baptist and our Lord, each fulfilled his own mission, according to the Divine **arrangement**; but that they had different missions. John's mission was pre-eminently that of a reprover and reformer, and we are to understand that as a Prophet he was supernaturally guided in respect to the various features of the course he took. Our Lord's mission, on the contrary, was a different one: He was gathering to Himself those whom John's ministry served to arouse to righteousness and to zeal to know and to do the Lord's will.

We who are called to be the Body of Christ and to follow Him may learn a lesson in this as respects our proper course. We are not sent forth as John was, to dwell in the wilderness, living and dressing uncouthly, and to criticise and denounce everything and everybody. Some of the Lord's dear people fail to notice that such commissions are special and very rare; and sometimes in following the wrong copy, they undesignedly bring reproach upon the Lord's cause.

We are to be **copies of God's dear Son, our Lord,** and not to be copies of John the Baptist. We are not to stir up strife by trying to mind other people's business, nor to seek to govern all the affairs of this world, reproving emperors, kings, governors, etc.; but, on the contrary, we are exhorted by the Apostle to remember that what God sees fit to permit, we can see fit to endure. Even though we find many things which we cannot endorse, we may equally find ourselves able to avoid any special denunciation of them—especially of things which have no bearing whatever upon the proper understanding and fulfilling of the Lord's Word. The Apostle points out the proper position, saying, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And our Lord emphasized the same thought, saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."—Rom. 12:18; Matt. 5:9.

An Unwise Course

Some of the holiest of the Lord's people err on this subject in their own families, and needlessly arouse prejudice and opposition, and make their homes unhappy, by continually finding fault with things which, though not up to the standard of saintliness and cross-bearing, are, nevertheless, not immoral or wicked, even in tendency. Parents and guardians are surely to guard against all tendencies toward immorality, etc., but to find fault with those they love, merely because they are only nominal Christians and have the spirit of worldliness, is certainly unwise. **The general life of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit is the very best reproof of worldliness they can give, and the very best recommendation of the glorious Gospel they profess.** This is the epistle that will be read, the light that will reprove darkness.

In other words, we must not expect from, nor try to force upon the unconsecrated the details of our own self-denials. We must wait until they shall see full consecration to be their "reasonable service" and present their bodies living sacrifices to God. Pastors and teachers, however, should seek to keep continually before the Lord's consecrated "flock" the high Scripture standard, realizing that many influences are continually at work to lower the standard of holiness and devotion.

"What Manner of Persons Ought We To Be"

How highly we, who belong to the Gospel Dispensation, should value its privileges and opportunities, seeking to "make our calling and election sure!" (2 Pet. 1:4-11.) If those who were called with an earthly calling, to be a "house of servants," rendered but a reasonable service when they engaged in the Lord's work zealously, as did John the Baptist, and were faithful, how much more zeal and energy ought we to put forth—we who have been favored so much more highly? "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!"—2 Pet. 3:11.

Let us remember that this "high calling," this "heavenly calling," to joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom, is a very special and a very limited call, and that so far as the Divine revelation shows, it will never be repeated. In view of these things, let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus the author, until He shall have become the finisher, of our faith.—Heb. 12:1.

"No looking back on Sodom's plains
No listening still to Babel's strains;
No tears for Egypt's song and smile,
No thirsting for its flowing Nile.

'Tis but a little and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home!
Another year, or more, or less,
And we have crossed the wilderness;
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won!"
—Z. '12:66-68.

The Parable of the Talents

IT IS supposable that some of the Lord's people may not be what is termed talented, in the sense of possessing large talents or many talents, but it is not supposable that any one in the Body of Christ would be without some talent, some opportunity for service. This parable of the Talents implies it. (Matthew 25:14-30.) Every one of these servants was called; every one of them received either one or more talents—and the parable did not apply merely to the beginning of the age, to the Apostles, etc., but evidently was intended to be applicable down to the end of the age, until the Lord should return from the "far country." As those who lived at that time did not remain until the Lord's coming, therefore the parable must include all who would become his disciples down to his second advent. Otherwise we could not be viewed as "co-workers together with God."

We cannot be servants if we have nothing wherewith to serve; we could not bring forth fruitage, either in ourselves or others, without some ability and opportunity. It therefore becomes an important matter to each to recognize the fact that he must have had given him at least one talent, and that he will be held responsible for the use of what he has.

Not Many Wise, Mighty, Noble Called

In the case of some of the Lord's people it would seem wise to call attention to the propriety of making sure what talent they have, and to make sure that they are not trying to use one that they have not. It seems to be a general weakness or failing amongst mankind to try to do something they cannot do, and to scorn that which they are able to do. The Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 1:26) said, "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called"—not that God objects to those having many talents serving his cause, but not many of these accept his call. Those who have many talents find many ways of using them and many people in the world to desire them; and, ambitious for place and preferment, they have an abundance of opportunity to shine before men; but in the Lord's service they would not, perhaps, find so good an opportunity for the display of their talents and, therefore, they would not gain the renown that might be theirs in the earthly pursuits. They would be accounted foolish by the world should they be very energetic in serving the Lord and seeking to glorify his name. "Why do you not become rich? Why do you not live in style and hold up your head among men and get a great name, etc.?" are suggestions which attract those who have many talents; therefore few of that class are disposed to accept the Lord's call; while those who realize that they never could make a name for themselves in the world, appreciate more, perhaps, the great "High Calling."

However, many of these of small talents increase them by use and become quite proficient in the Truth in various lines in proportion as they are faithful in the use of the talents they possess. The Truth seems to have a brightening and clarifying effect upon all minds, great and small.

One of the important lessons, then, for the Lord's people to learn is to notice what talents the Lord has given them, whether time, or education, or special opportunities for service; and to keep them in use, that their brilliancy may increase and not become dimmed by neglect.

We can readily see that there would be, as already expressed, more difficulty with one of five talents, in making a consecration, than in the case of a one-talent man, although the man of one talent might have much cause for discouragement in feeling that his gift is insignificant and poor in proportion to what many others have. The man of five talents would have the opposite experience and be in danger of being puffed up, "heady and high minded." We might well reason that the Lord in these varying conditions would make his grace sufficient; indeed, he has promised so to do for all those who put their trust in him.

"Give Me Neither Poverty Nor Riches"

The man with the one talent has in some respects a better opportunity for making his "calling and election sure." However, Solomon undoubtedly was wise in requesting of the Lord, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." (Prov. 30:8.) In other words, probably the two-talent man would have a natural advantage, in that he would be neither so likely to be discouraged nor to be puffed up.

These conditions are not of the Lord's making. If the Lord made a man with one talent, and made another with two talents, and another with five talents, he would in some way doubtless have equalized the matter so that the talents of one would offset those of another. But he has not given our talents in such a way. These are merely what we have by nature and what we bring to the Lord in consecration and devote to him, though they are, in another sense, all his gifts. The Lord, therefore, is not responsible for a man's having but one talent, nor for his having five, but at his consecration the Lord makes him steward over his possessions to do the best he can with them.

The force of the argument would be, then, that the man with the five talents would have more difficulty in keeping them fully employed, fully devoted and fully separated from worldly ambitions, etc., than would the man who had fewer. So if any of us were given a choice, it would, perhaps, be wise to choose the medium, because of the increase of responsibilities to those possessing more.—Z. '10: 251, 252.

The Ministry of Comfort

Isaiah 61:1-3.

> "The Lord hath anointed me . . . to comfort all that mourn; to appoint [promise] unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

OUR TEXT is surely good tidings in a very deep sense. Its message is one of "comfort," not only to Zion, the consecrated Church, but to **all who mourn**; and as mentally we cast our eyes over the world we are deeply impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind are in mourning: as the Apostle expresses it, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." There are undoubtedly a few who are full, satisfied, and who mourn for nothing, and who, therefore, under these conditions, are excluded from any share in this promised blessing; but they are exceptions to the rule. Some of them are wealthy in this world's goods, and feel that they have need of nothing, and are kept busy with their efforts to enjoy themselves. There are others of the same full class who, though not wealthy, have a very self-satisfied feeling as respects their moral status: they do not realize themselves as sinners; they do not realize their daily imperfections nor their need of a Savior; and are not mourning for anything, and not therefore in the way to be comforted with any of the comforting assurances and promises and provision which the Lord has made for those who mourn.

So far as the world is concerned, our Lord's ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time is sure to come when all that mourn, all the "groaning creation," shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Millennial Kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ:—the balm for every trouble, every wound; the cure for every blight, every sin and every imperfection; and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly into the care of the Good Physician. But the poor world, blinded and deceived by the god of this world as respects the character and plan of Jehovah, can neither see, hear, nor appreciate now the wonderful provisions made for them, and hence they cannot receive the blessing, the consolation, the "comfort" now, but must wait for it until the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, the binding of Satan, and the opening of their understanding with the eye-salve of the truth.

But as respects Zion, the consecrated Church, this comfort is now her privilege, and all children of Zion need to be comforted. First of all, they need the comforting knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that they are no longer strangers and aliens and foreigners, but children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with him. They need to be comforted, too, with the assurances of the Lord's Word that our God is very sympathetic, "very pitiful," and that if anyone be overtaken in a fault he may be restored, and "not be utterly cast down." If the children of Zion had no such consolations as these they surely would be utterly discouraged, disheartened, and faint by the way; hence the Lord has provided these comforting assurances, pointing out to them that having begun a good work in them he is desirous of completing it, if they will permit him to do so, and that to this end they must abide in Christ by faith; coupled with obedience to the extent of their ability. What Christian is there who has not shared these consolations, these comforts; and what Christian has not needed them, and realized that without them he would long since have been undone?

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord he is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of his adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and offsetting of **every** unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the holy spirit—it is the channel, and, hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26.) Those who have the holy spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the holy spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, his disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of his love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the holy spirit (the channel of divine favor), reaches us through the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the medium, or sub-channel through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of all knowledge reach us; in the Apostle's language, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and **comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope."—Rom. 15:4.

Yet while this comfort is of the Father, through the Son, by the holy spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, we are informed that in great measure it is communicated by the members of the body of Christ one to another, as the Apostle, for instance, after relating certain features of the divine plan respecting the deliverance of the Church, says, "Wherefore, **comfort one another** with these words." (1 Thess. 4:18.) Similarly, the Apostle declares that he sent Timothy to the Church at Ephesus, and again to the Church at Colosse, that **he might comfort** their hearts. This, of course, signifies that he was to draw their attention to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's **Word,** and that thus they might drink in the holy **spirit** of all the promises, and that thus they might be comforted, not only with respect to the things promised, but with respect to the loving compassion and sympathy of him who promises them.

Writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says that he sent Timothy—"to establish you and to **comfort you** concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto: for verily, when we were with you we told you we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you." (1 Thess. 3:2-5.) Here again it is evident that the **comforting signifies and implies establishment in the faith once delivered to the saints, that all the terms and conditions of our covenant should be clearly held in mind, and that the promises of reward at the end of the journey might serve to comfort, strengthen and establish the children of Zion in their endurance of the tribulations as good soldiers.** This comfort, again, was of the Lord, through the holy spirit, through the agency of Paul and Timothy. Again, the same Apostle, speaking in the same strain, says, "Wherefore, **comfort yourselves** together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."—1 Thess. 5:11.

All of the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and his representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the kingdom to "comfort all that mourn," and to be the trees of righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2), but they should remember that in the present life they have a ministry of comfort to perform also, toward all who mourn **in Zion**—toward all of the Lord's people who are in any tribulation, physical or mental disquiet, dis-ease; and they should remember, too, that just in proportion as they are filled with this spirit now, it is their privilege to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort the mourning ones. No one can have this spirit of helpfulness, this disposition to comfort and to strengthen, and to edify, and to upbuild the household of faith, except he have in considerable measure the spirit of the truth, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love: and in proportion as each seeks to cultivate this privilege of brotherly helpfulness, in comforting and upbuilding and strengthening, in that same proportion he will find the spirit of love developing and abounding in his own heart, and that his likeness to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the body, is becoming more pronounced from day to day and from year to year.

Finally, in view of what we have seen respecting the Lord's goodness toward his people, and the methods by which he comforts them through the holy spirit, the Scriptures and the brethren, let us note one of the Apostle's expressions respecting the great comfort and consolation which God has provided for his consecrated, faithful people, saying—

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who **comforteth us** in all our tribulation, that we may be **able to comfort** them which are in any trouble, by **the comfort** wherewith we ourselves are **comforted of God.**"—2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

So then, all of our lessons and experiences in life in connection with trials and difficulties and tribulations, if we are rightly exercised by them, should bring us larger experiences in the Lord's comfort, through the gracious promises of his Word and the spirit of the same; and should make us the more capable and efficient agents and representatives of the Lord, his Word and his spirit, in communicating comfort to others about us in their trials and difficulties.—Z. '00: 214-216.

What Doth It Profit?

Mal. 3:14-18.

"What doth it profit me?" I hear a weary pilgrim say,
As he sinks beside his burden upon the "narrow way."
"What do I gain," he plaintive moans, "in service of my God,
Save weary pain and labor, bearing this heavy load?
For many dreary years I've toiled through sunshine and through rain,
Through chilling winds and wintry blasts, I've suffered keenest pain,
The rocks have cut my weary feet, I've left a bleeding track,
I cannot climb this mountain side, my feet are slipping back.

Why should I suffer day by day, bearing this heavy cross?
Why may I not the 'promise' gain without this pain and loss?
I see so many all around who do not serve the Lord,
Yet they are not thus burdened and their lives hold rich reward;
Their barns are filled with plenty and their vats with wine o'erflow,
While I am made to drink the dregs of bitterness and woe."
And thus he faints upon his way, and darkness fills his heart.
O, foolish one! with "armor" loosed, and pierced by Satan's "dart"—

Dost thou not hear the Master: "The servant's like his Lord,"
O, listen to His message and heed His Holy Word:
"If ye will suffer with me, then with me ye shall reign;
He who would shine in glory, is perfected through pain."

We cannot walk with Christ our Lord and still find flowery ways,
The path that leads to Heavenly heights finds many sunless days;
The "narrow way" to Life Divine, oft leads through shadow-land,
Yet the loving Master walks beside, and holds our trembling hand.

The "shield of faith" we must not fail to use as on we go,
For "darts" are flying thick and fast from the Christian's wily foe;
The world has not been "called" to walk upon our "narrow way."
The shallow pleasures they enjoy are only for a day.
O, who would covet their poor joys, or look with envious eye
Upon the flow'rs which deck their path and blossom but to die?
Happy your lot, ye sons of God! O, "Jewels" of the Lord
Press on! Nor faint upon the road that leads to your reward!

The way is weary, yet it ends in life, in bliss, in God!
Press on! Nor longing look ye back o'er the path that ye have trod.
Keep looking upward toward the "Prize," and let its glory wake
Glad "Hallelujahs" to our King, who suffered for our sake;
Who died to give us life, that we might also with Him die,
Then share "His Resurrection" and His glorious throne on High! —Z. '02:120.

Sennacherib's Invasion of Israel

2 Kings 19: 20-22, 28-37.

"God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble."—Psalm 46:1.

TODAY'S Study shows King Hezekiah under severe trials, and sets forth the resultant development of his faith in Jehovah God and the Lord's response to the king's trust and prayers.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had invaded the northern, or ten-tribe, kingdom, had carried away its people, and had placed peoples of other nationalities in the land in their stead. Eight years after his conquest of Israel, he determined upon an invasion of the kingdom of Judah. One after another the Assyrians had already conquered various nations, and were now evidently bent upon the conquest of Egypt. But first they were disposing of the intermediate kingdoms lying upon the route between Assyria and Egypt; and Judah was the last of these. Bent upon conquest and mastery, rather than upon destruction, King Sennacherib, while laying siege to some of the intermediate countries, first sent letters and subsequently his representative and general, the Rabshakeh, with an armed host to Jerusalem, demanding the full surrender of the kingdom, in order that the people might be deported to other lands, as the people of the ten-tribe kingdom had been.

Both these letters and the message were filled with boastings of the power of Assyria and of the conquests already made. They also contained promises that the people of Judah would be given homes and conditions similar to those then enjoyed, the object apparently being the establishment of the Assyrian empire on a firm basis by the obliteration, as far as possible, of the feelings of patriotism in the various peoples conquered. Not only did these messages boast of Sennacherib's power as exemplified in other wars, but, taking cognizance of the fact that Israel trusted in Jehovah, they first declared that the Assyrians were sent there by Jehovah Himself for the very purpose of overthrowing the kingdom of Judah and of taking the people captive, and then asserted that Israel's confidence in Jehovah was vain, because the various nations which had already been conquered had trusted severally to their own gods, and yet all had alike failed; and that Israel's God, Jehovah, could do nothing more for them than could the gods of the other peoples against the mighty power of Assyria, which was rapidly becoming a world-empire.

King Hezekiah's Prayer Answered

King Hezekiah's first move was to placate his adversary by becoming a vassal to King Sennacherib and paying annual tribute. As a preliminary step in this direction, he sent the Assyrian king a present of great value—gold, silver, ivory couches, etc. For this purpose he even stripped the gold and silver ornaments from the Temple at Jerusalem. Herein we believe that he greatly erred; and apparently, as a consequence of his failure to recognize Jehovah as the Almighty Ruler and Preserver of His people and His typical kingdom the Assyrians were permitted to assail the two-tribe kingdom, to destroy many of the outlying smaller cities and to besiege Jerusalem with heavy siege-towers, etc.

Nevertheless, when it came to the extremity, King Hezekiah's faith in the Lord increased in proportion as the power of the Assyrians was manifested, and the condition of Jerusalem and its inhabitants became the more critical. Then it was that he did what he should have done at the very beginning. With the Prophet Isaiah, his faithful friend and adviser, he joined in prayer to the Lord, laying before Jehovah the letters which he had received from the haughty Assyrian king, recounting his boastful words, and beseeching the Lord to have mercy upon His covenanted people and to grant them deliverance from their enemies, when there seemed no hope from any other quarter.

Verses 20-22 of today's Study form a part of the answer to this prayer, sent to King Hezekiah through the Prophet Isaiah. The remainder of the Prophet's message was evidently intended to be the reply which the king should send to King Sennacherib through the Rabshakeh—that the people of Jehovah laughed to scorn his boastful message and ultimatum. This reply calls attention to Sennacherib's boastful pride and his blasphemy of the only true God, the God of Israel. The threat of the hook in the nose and the bridle in the mouth (Verse 28) is figurative, representing the manner in which bullocks and horses are controlled, and illustrating the manner in which the Lord would control the Assyrian army. (Verses 6,7.) The message calls attention to the previous success of the Assyrian monarch, and points out that it was because the Lord had so permitted, designed and foretold. It also points out that Sennacherib was still under the Divine Power, and on the present occasion would be turned back, would be unsuccessful, because he had blasphemed Jehovah, while Israel and King Hezekiah would be heard and succored.

The Lesson to Spiritual Israelites

Spiritual Israel may draw valuable lessons from the foregoing. **We should beware lest at any time we lose sight of the Lord's power on our behalf, no matter how great or dark or threatening the evil which assails us.** A proper faith will look up to God under such circumstances and, relying upon His promises, will seek His aid rather than purchase deliverance by any compromises with the great Adversary. But, on the contrary, **how many** are disposed to do as King Hezekiah did—to purchase peace with things consecrated to the Lord—to compromise the truth! For instance, if threatened with the disfavor of friends or neighbors or employers, how many are willing to conciliate such adversaries by adopting a more worldly course, by subtracting from the time, means, influence, etc., consecrated to the Lord, considerable portions to be given to worldly service or to secure domestic peace or social advancement or commercial prosperity! **As surely as the Lord's consecrated people do this, so surely may we expect that the Lord will permit to come upon them the very difficulties which they dread and which they seek to avert by unholy compromise.** They need just such a lesson; and as a faithful father will administer needed chastisement and correction to his son, so the Lord deals with those who have been adopted into His family.

With the world in general matters are different. God's special dealings and special corrections are manifestations of His special care for those whom He is now selecting from amongst mankind for a great future work. For this work this class need to be prepared; and amongst their lessons those of unlimited faith and trust in the Almighty are absolutely essential. As the Prophet David expressed it: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray." (Psalm 119:67.) In other words, because he was a consecrated servant of God, he was corrected in order that he might be brought back after he had gone astray. So it is with all who have accepted the Call to joint-heirship with Christ. They are not permitted to go astray and to make compromises the tendency of which would be to lead them further and further away from faith and trust in the Lord. Therefore they are chastened; and happy are they who, like King Hezekiah, permit Divine chastisements to develop more and more of faith and obedience.

Divine Care for His People Manifested

It required great faith and courage on the part of King Hezekiah and his princes, and of the people of Judah in general, to resist the great power of Assyria and to send to King Sennacherib such a reply as the Lord had indicated. Yet evidently their faith and trust were developed in proportion to the difficulty; and shortly they beheld the fulfilment of the Lord's declaration respecting the Assyrians. The Rabshakeh—commander of the Assyrian forces—returned to meet King Sennacherib and to give him King Hezekiah's reply; and then, apparently, the catastrophe occurred which destroyed Sennacherib's army, referred to in today's Study.—Verses 35, 36.

In Verse 7, the destructive agency which brought about the catastrophe is called a blast sent by the Lord. From this statement some have supposed that it was a simoom, or sandstorm, not uncommon in the vicinity of the Arabian desert. In today's Study it is called the smiting of the angel of the Lord; and from this others have assumed that a pestilence broke out in the Assyrian army and destroyed in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's warriors; for elsewhere in the Scriptures pestilence is spoken of as the work of a destroying angel, or messenger. (2 Samuel 24:16, 17.) Jewish tradition ascribes the destruction of the Assyrian army to a pestilence. Here, as often elsewhere in the Scriptures, the word "angel" does not necessarily refer to a spirit being of the angelic order, but simply signifies a messenger. God is as able to use winds, waves, lightnings, sandstorms or pestilence as any other agency in the execution of His will. He "maketh the winds His angels and flaming fire His servants."—Psalm 104:4.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, who visited Egypt in the fifth century B. C., relates a story which he heard from the priests of the temple of Ptah in Memphis, and which ascribes the retreat of Sennacherib's army to an invasion of mice. The story is that during the night field mice gnawed the quivers, bowstrings and shield-straps of the Assyrians, and thus rendered them unable to resist the attack of the Egyptian army. But some have suggested that this is merely a figurative way of declaring that a pestilence destroyed the Assyrian army; for with the ancients the mouse symbolized pestilence. . . .

The Leadings of Jehovah's Grace

The Natural Israelites accepted the overthrow and turning back of Sennacherib's forces as of Divine interposition, although the sceptically inclined might view the matter differently and might ascribe the withdrawal of the Assyrian king to natural causes. So Spiritual Israelites often find that God's answers to their prayers and His fulfilments of His promises are of such a kind that the trustful may see in them the hand of God, while those living less near to the Almighty will see in them nothing but the casualties of nature. Thus it is that our own spiritual condition has much to do with our joy in the Lord and with our appreciation of His care over us and of the fulfilment of His promises.

All of the Divine leadings are along this line; namely, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." Whoever will not exercise faith in God cannot have the joy and peace which come to believers, and which are designed for them alone. Not only is it the proper thing that as the Lord's people we should trust Him for His goodness and His providential care, calling to mind His promises and pleading them before Him in our supplications, but it is equally proper that at every step of our journey we should seek to see how Divine providence is directing our way and is causing all of life's affairs to work together for our good because we love God. Such expectations of Divine care, such waiting for it and looking for it, are evidences of true faith and are pleasing to the Lord.—Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:4; Z. '17:200, 201.

The Cup Which the Father Pours

John 18:11.

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

OUR TEXT expresses most beautifully, most concisely, most forcefully, the principles which underlay our Master's obedience to the Heavenly Father, and which enabled him in all things to come off conqueror and "overcomer;" and all who are seeking to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, to be his disciples indeed, will do well to ponder the thought expressed in these words: "The cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The thought is clear: It is that he recognized the circumstances and conditions in which he found himself, as being not of those of his own making, nor yet those made for him by his enemies. He recognized the divine supervision of all of his affairs, and knew that nothing could possibly come upon him except as the Father would permit; and because the Father had so arranged it, had poured out this cup for him, therefore it was duty on his part to drink it.

We would not undertake to say that the Lord's people should never look for ways of escape from impending trials and difficulties; for we have the Lord's promise to this effect, that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to endure, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape from those features of it which would be beyond the possibility of endurance. When, therefore, we feel that our submission to evil has about reached its climax, where succor must come or we must utterly fall, that is the time for us to look about us to see what way of escape the Lord is opening for us. But we are to be sure that the way of escape which we take is not of our own, but of the Lord's provision; for if we should run away from duty and trial and testing in one place, it would merely be to fall into other trials and testings, perhaps severer, in another quarter. We are to know in advance that trials, difficulties, persecutions, slanders, are all a part of the portion which the Father has poured out, not only for the Head of the body, but also for all the members. We are therefore to be prepared to endure hardness as good soldiers; not fleeing, but courageously accepting as of the Lord's providence whatever he may permit to come to us, unless we shall see a reasonable, proper, honorable way of escaping from it, which will not be in violation of our covenant, nor in violation of any law of righteousness.

No other lesson, perhaps, is more needed by the Lord's followers than the one of willingness to drink the cup which the Father pours—a recognition that the Father is guiding and directing in our affairs because we are his, as members of the body of the Anointed One. In these respects the consecrated children of God occupy a very different position from the world, with whom the Father is not dealing as sons, who are not on trial for glory, honor and immortality, and for whom, consequently, he is not now pouring cups of trial, testing, endurance, etc. "The cup which we drink, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"—a share in his sufferings? "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him; if we be dead with him we believe that we shall also live with him."—Z. '01:91.

Faithfulness in Little Things

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."—Luke 16:10.

WE HAVE in our text the statement of a great principle, one which could almost universally be acknowledged. Life's experiences have taught us that whoever can be trusted in little things can be trusted also in great matters. A man who is cautious in respect to small affairs is cautious also in important undertakings. One who is gentle in the little acts of every day life will be gentle on great occasions.

Our Lord applies this principle to His followers in a general way; and we believe it to be one of the most important lessons which the Christian can learn. There are many who are exceedingly careful about handling a large sum of money, but who are very careless in handling a small amount. There are those who are scrupulously exact as to large sums committed to their care, but who think nothing about the trifling amounts. But whoever cultivates a habit of carelessness about small things will be likely to become careless about large matters. On the other hand, whoever is careful of every dollar, every dime, who is careful to pay promptly every small debt, will be still more careful in respect to large amounts, large debts.

So it would appear to be a general principle in life that those who are careless in small things and careful in large matters will in due time or under great stress prove unreliable and unfaithful in everything, if such faithfulness should conflict with their own selfish interests. In other words, the trifles of life have an important bearing upon our character-building. Whoever learns to be conscientious about everything is being properly exercised by the lessons of life. We see this in our own individual experiences. Some are quite careless in regard to the rights of others; for instance, they would take without permission an umbrella belonging to another, saying, "I want it only for an hour or so, and I will bring it back." Such a person is not properly conscientious about small things. One who would take an umbrella for even an hour has not sufficient principle to be trusted in larger things. Others will borrow articles, and forget or neglect to return them promptly, thus putting the owner to great inconvenience and annoyance. At best the habit of borrowing is deplorable.

The Scriptures tell us that our Lord is selecting a company to be with Him as under priests, under judges, under kings, to have control of the affairs of earth during the thousand years of His Reign; and that whoever is chosen for this work must have special fitness, special character. Those who fully yield themselves to Him will be prepared for this important position; those who do not so yield themselves will not be prepared. Therefore our Lord gives us to understand that present opportunities are to be prized as opportunities for indicating what is our real attitude of heart. He makes it a condition that we cannot be His disciples unless we make a full surrender of ourselves to Him as our great Instructor, to be guided in all of our affairs in harmony with His will.

The Master tells us that no matter how small the affairs of life, we are to understand that the Father knows what are our needs; and that just as surely as He provides for the sparrows and the lilies of the field, so surely will He provide for those who are His children. Our Lord says to us, "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?" Even while we were slaves of sin, the Father made provision for our return to His favor and to everlasting life, on condition that we obey Him and respond to His clearly specified terms. How much more will He care for us now that we have become His children!

Humility Essential to Service

Even in the smallest affairs of life we are to look for the Lord's will. The right attitude for us to maintain is this: I serve the Lord Christ; and whether it is a great work or a small one does not matter. "Therefore whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31.) The humblest kind of service is acceptable to the Lord if prompted by love. . . .

If our work is in the kitchen or any other part of the home, it is service of the Lord if we do all as unto Him. But He kindly gives us opportunity to do something for the brethren.

So whatever we do, we are doing it for the Lord, we are doing it as unto Him, doing it as He would have it done. There is a way of looking at things that makes us feel happy. It is a good thing to ask ourselves occasionally, What am I seeking? What is my motive in doing this? For whom am I working?

As we thus work for the Lord and strive to please Him, and cultivate the spirit of thankfulness for service in the little things, we shall be proving our worthiness for the great things. Our desire to render faithful service to the Lord will manifest itself in economy in the home and in consideration for others around us. Whoever will strike too many matches, or who will strike matches on the walls of the house, is thus manifesting that he is not fully trustworthy. Whoever whistles around the house to disturb others, or who gets up at a very early hour and makes so much noise that others cannot rest, or who comes in late at night and goes noisily to his room, demonstrates that he has not learned to observe the Golden Rule, has not learned to respect the rights of others.

The very beginning of all our conduct as members of the Body of Christ should be the observance of the principles of justice. We should think as to what are the rights of others and as to whether we are impinging on those rights. If we find that we are so doing, we may know that we are violating the law of justice. In every circumstance of life, justice must come first, and afterwards we may be as kind and generous as possible.

"Lord, Is It I?"

In respect to spiritual matters the principle is the same. Little rifts in the lute spoil the music. God is seeking a very special class for the Kingdom. He desires those who will be absolutely loyal to Him, loyal to His Word, faithful not only in some great thing, but also in the smallest affairs of life—faithful in thought, word and deed. Whoever is thus faithful, whoever exercises care in all these respects, will be fitting and preparing himself for the Kingdom. Whoever is careless and inattentive to little things is not fit for the great honor the Lord has in store for the wholly faithful. He is watching us closely, but with a kindly eye. He wishes us to succeed. He gives us the necessary instruction and guidance. When we practice carefulness in little things, we are thereby developing our characters along right lines. If we fail to do this, we shall never become fit to be entrusted with important matters. Let us each make this a personal question: What kind of character am I developing as the days go by?

But the Christian who makes a mistake, and who sees his mistake and makes what amends are possible, will find his experience beneficial to him—perhaps throughout the remainder of his life. Through the castigation which he imposes upon himself he will learn greater carefulness. Care and watchfulness are necessary, and we should see to it that they extend to every affair of life—to the use of our time, our talents, our money, etc. Whatever we have of these is from the Lord and belongs to Him. We should therefore carefully consider what we shall do with these opportunities and be very conscientious in the use of them—how much we shall use for ourselves and how we shall use the remainder. Our course in these matters will show to the Lord whether or not we are fitted for a place in glory.

Our use or abuse of all the talents, great or small, entrusted to us by the Master will demonstrate how careful we are to note His will and to do that will in respect to this feature of our stewardship. By and by He purposes to give to the faithful those things which will be of far more value than dimes and dollars; affairs of great responsibility will be committed to them. If any have not been faithful—if any one has thought of the time, the dimes, the dollars, etc., as being his own, and has so used them, that one will not be of the class the Lord is seeking. He is viewing us according to the Covenant of Sacrifice which we have made with Him. (Psalm 50:5.) If we had a million dollars, it would be only a small thing in His sight. It is the manner in which we use the things of this life that manifests our loyalty to the Lord and that demonstrates how we would use the Divine power during the thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Our grandest opportunities for service are comparatively insignificant. But we are to appreciate even the least service which we may be able to render. We are to esteem that our service here is not to be compared with the things which the Lord has in reservation for those who love Him. For a thousand years they are to reign with their Lord; and then will follow the ages to come" during which He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward them through Christ Jesus their Lord. (Ephesians 2:7.) In view of this future inheritance of the saints in light, is it any wonder that our Lord wishes us to have kind, just, generous hearts? Our opportunity of being in the Little Flock will depend largely upon our appreciation of our opportunities for serving the Lord in the little things of the present life.—Z. '15: 234, 235.

◆

The man who underrates his worth comes much nearer the truth than the man who overrates; for the fact is that no member of the fallen race, however favorably he may compare with some of his fellows more bruised by the fall, has anything whereof to boast.—Z. '93; 5, 6.

◆

Satisfaction will not be attained fully in the present life, though the believer who progresses and draws nearer and nearer to God will have more and more of this satisfaction to the end of his journey, receiving the full measure of satisfaction in righteousness and perfection on the other side of the vail. Similarly, in our drawing near to God, we may continue to draw nearer and nearer to him, as we obtain deeper experience in his grace, growing also in knowledge and love in the present life; but the full attainment of our privilege of drawing near to God will not be reached until we shall have passed the Second Vail—passed through death, and been changed from human to spirit beings, and have entered into heaven itself the perfect heavenly condition. There and then we shall be fully at one with the heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus. —Z. '00: 228.

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Those who have proved their devotion to God and to his benevolent plan for the salvation and blessing of humanity will not lose their reward. God's eye is upon all such: he is marking their conduct in all the peculiar circumstances and conditions in which they are placed: and no one who is faithfully and diligently acting his part, however humble that part may be, can escape his notice. All such will receive abundance of honor in due time; but the crown must not be looked for until the cross has been borne to the end. On this side the vail that separates the present from the future lies the pathway of humiliation and self-sacrifice, but beyond are glory and peace and praise and joy forevermore. Beloved, keep the promises in mind that you may gather from them the inspiration you will need more and more as the trials of this present time and service increase in number and severity.—2 Tim. 2:3; Rom. 6:4, 5; 8:17, 18; 1 John 3:3; Z. '94:302.

◆

O that all the consecrated may more fully realize themselves as the Lord's Stewards, or Executors, appointed to administer upon their own Wills. How it would destroy the I, **my, mine** spirit, to realize that the I that once was is no more, but is dead; that "I live, yet not I," my former self; that I is dead: but Christ liveth in me; that I, **as a member of the Christ,** a spiritual creature, now live. The feeling, then, should be, I want to spend, fully and promptly, yet wisely as possible, the Master's goods, time, talent, money, influence, etc., put into my hands for disposal, anxious only that every farthing of it shall be so spent as the Master's Word directs, and as His example illustrated.—Z. Jan. '86:3.

◆

Some get the mistaken idea that a steward is not expected to **spend** that committed to his care unless circumstances **demand** it of him. This is a great mistake; it is part of a steward's business to look up opportunities for using the "goods" committed to his charge. This is the clear teaching of Matt. 25:27: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." Such diligence in seeking and finding ways and means to dispose of our consecrated talents to God's glory, and to the advancement of His truth, is essential to faithful stewardship (Matt. 25:21), and any other course is a violation of covenant; and he who does so, is an "unprofitable servant." (25:29.) It is thus that Paul reasoned when he wrote, It is required of stewards that they be found faithful, and it was thus that he practiced, also. He was a faithful steward indeed, ever seeking new and greater opportunities to spend and be spent in the heavenly service. And as always, "He that seeketh findeth."—Z. Jan. '86:3.

◆

Since his love is so great and his power all mighty, we have full confidence that no power in earth or heaven can forcibly separate us from his love and favors granted us in and through our Redeemer. Here rests our full assurance of faith—none can pluck us from our Father's favor and protection. Here our song is triumphant:

"In God I have found a retreat,"
Where I can securely abide:
No refuge nor rest so complete,
And here I intend to reside."

"Oh what comfort it brings,
My soul sweetly sings,
I am safe from all dangers
While under his wings."

But is there then no danger? There is no danger of others plucking or forcibly separating us from God's favor, or turning his love away from us: the only danger is in our own doings: we can despise or lightly esteem the favors of God, and thus forfeit our privileges under those favors, and fall from them.—Z. March, '86:4.

◆

To "be Christ's," evidently means a great deal more than faith, respectability and good endorsement. It means to **belong** to Christ:—to be his, body, soul and spirit:—to be his today and forever: his servant, to do his **will** in his **way** and at his **time**; when convenient and pleasurable, and when inconvenient, painful and difficult.—Z. '94:276.

◆

The best provision which parents can make for their children is to give them, by precept and example, faithful instruction in **righteousness**. Remember that "the fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Begin therefore to instruct them in the plan of salvation, the plan of the ages. As they come to a true appreciation of God's wisdom, justice and love, it will give them broader and truer views of justice and love, in respect to their own conduct and toward their fellow creatures. Teach them meekness and humility, and the folly of pride and arrogance. Teach them generosity of thought, and how to be happy with little, reminding them frequently that godliness with contentment is true riches. Remind them of the Lord's words, "seek meekness, seek righteousness. It may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (Zeph. 2:3.) The rich in this world's uncertain riches, and the proud, whether poor or rich, and all that do wickedly, will be special sufferers.—Compare Mal. 4:1; James 5:1-6; Z. '96:82.

◆

"The world knoweth us not"—it has seen the wheel of discipline which has been cutting the Lord's jewels for centuries, but it has not understood the necessity and value of the process. It may even have caught an occasional glimpse of the jewels but not to any advantage—not so as to be able to know the real merit of their characters nor the value of the cutting and polishing, for even the already finished facets are smeared with the cement and the slime from the grind-wheel. But the great, loving, Master-workman and Lapidarist-in-Chief knows and has explained it all to the "jewels"; and they know in part now, and by faith are trusting all the remainder, singing in their hearts, "He knows, he knows!" "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape." Yes, the Lord knows just how much pressure to apply,—just how much friction is necessary—and will not willingly afflict us, nor cause tribulation which he cannot and will not overrule for our good. And being thus assured that all things are working together for good to them that love God, his living jewels can "rejoice in tribulation," knowing that it is working out in them the peaceable fruits of righteousness—of love, and that such experiences are essential, and that without them they could never be amongst the gathered jewels.—Z. '98:365.

◆

All those who are really "members of the body of Christ" must in their hearts reach that condition where they can say with the greatest sincerity of heart, "The Lord's will be done."—Z. '01:228.

◆

We may, reasonably expect that divine protection will shelter two classes (1) The children of the Lord's consecrated people who will not have previously reached years of discretion and personal responsibility. (See 1 Cor. 7:14.) (2) Some whose eyes will get opened during the trouble, and who will promptly avail themselves of the grace of God and fully consecrate themselves to his service. These two classes will, we believe, be subjects of divine care in the day of trouble. And although they will not "escape" from it, as will the saints, they will, we believe, be preserved, guarded, provided for in the midst of it.—Z. '96:192.

◆

The words of the Psalmist—"A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand" —are no exaggeration. Nor should the faithful few be at all dismayed when the various shakings sift out their number; for so it must be until only that which cannot be shaken shall remain.—Z. '92:72.

◆

There should be no need that any one should long be in doubt on the subject of whether he is or is not a member of the Church, the body of Christ. —Z. '03:170.

◆

Our temptations will be as strong as were those of Jesus; i.e., they will be as strong for us as his were for him. As he was a perfect Man, he was much more able to reason into these things and to see his way through them than are we. Yet the same principle is involved. Jesus had perfect flesh, perfect mentality; but he also had larger ambitions. We have imperfect flesh, defective mentality, and have not the same degree of ambition. And so the Father has seemed to arrange that all his sons shall have practically the same amount of difficulty and testing.

Jesus had all the vigor and energy of a perfect man, and naturally the greater dread of death. It is a comparatively small thing for a person who is weakened by disease and physical suffering and who is drawing to the tomb, to say, "I am so tired, and would be so glad to die!" But for one who is enjoying perfection of life and vigor, to say, "Father, I yield up my life to thee," is a different matter. He would naturally desire to cling tenaciously to life, to shrink from letting it slip from his grasp.—Z. '18:104.

◆

Saul seems to have been fully possessed of his senses, and to have realized that he was the subject of a miracle. The voice which he heard was one, not of approval, as he might have expected, since he was supposedly in the divine service, but one of reproof: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Paul's clearness of mind is manifest in his inquiry, "Who art thou, Lord?" He recognized at once that the one who had thus power to arrest him in his journey was a lordly one, a powerful one, yet he wished to make no mistake, he wished to know who it was who thus reproved him, that he might benefit the more. The answer must have been a surprise to him, almost a shock: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

Our Lord's answer shows us how intimately he stands related with all those who are truly his; those who touch his saints touch him, for are they not, as the Apostle declares, "members in particular of the body of Christ?" He is indeed, "the Head of the Church which is his body," and the ascended Head feels for and cares for and is interested in even the weakest and humblest of those whom he recognizes as truly his. If we remember this it will be a great help to us in the midst of trials and persecutions—the thought that we are "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," that "as he was, so are we in this world," and that while we are in the flesh Christ is in the flesh, and that this will continue until the last members, even the feet members of the body, shall have suffered and have entered into glory. Let us remember this also, and specially, if at any time we are tempted to deal harshly or speak rudely or think unkindly of any of the "brethren." Let us consider that as we, with all our weaknesses and unwilling imperfections, are the Lord's members and subjects of his interest and care, so also are all of the brethren; and that inasmuch as we do, or do not do, to one of the least of his brethren, we do, or do not do, to him. If this thought of the intimate relationship between the Head and the members could be always fresh before our minds, how favorable would be the influence; how often we would improve the opportunity, not only of suffering, as the body of Christ, but of suffering with the fellow members and assisting in bearing their burdens. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3:16; Heb. 2:11; Col. 1:24; Z. '01:183, 184.

◆

In the midst of all the confusion incidental to the fall of Babylon, the Lord himself will crown his faithful with glory and beauty. Even in the present life his truth in their hearts shall cause their faces to shine, and their table shall be spread even in the midst of those who are their enemies, who will be compelled to admit that these have meat to eat that the world knoweth not of and that they have a filling of the Lord's spirit that gives them joy and peace even in the midst of trials and difficulties.—Z. '02: 334.

◇

The fact is that we are all insignificant, of very little importance in the execution of the Lord's plan. The Lord could have done all His great work without us and our co-operation, probably more easily than with us. But He very graciously permits us to have a part in His work, for our own good and blessing.—Z. '16:132.

◇

Indeed, we are distinctly shown that all but "the elect," a faithful few, will be misled by some of these various deceptive snares. But the "very elect," because fully consecrated to God, shall have light and help sufficient to prevent them from being deceived so as to fall into such errors.—Z. '96:179.

◇

On the third day near noon the whole matter came to me as clear as the noon-day sun—so clear and convincing and so harmonious with the whole tenor of Scripture, that I could not question its correctness: and no one has ever yet been able to find a flaw in it. This has been published in several editions in pamphlet form under the title, "TABERNACLE SHADOWS OF THE BETTER SACRIFICES."—Z. '06: 234.

◇

The angels of the Lord have a charge more particularly over us of the Gospel Church than over any other of the Lord's people at any previous time in the world's history. The Lord is especially interested in Spiritual Israel. These angels, then, care for us, supervise our affairs, and are God's agencies or channels of communication to us as to His will; that is, communication in the sense of providences for us, causing this providence or the other providence.—Z. '15: 57.

◇

We understand that each one of the Lord's people, in proportion as he is one of God's true children, has a ministering spirit, a person, an angel, who has charge of his affairs. This angel makes his report to the Lord, whether monthly, weekly or hourly we do not know. If God sees this to be the wise, proper course, we have every confidence in His Wisdom. Whatever God has arranged is fully satisfactory to us in this matter, and we are sure that it is quite right and fully in harmony with the Divine character.—Z. '15: 57.

◇

To experience temptation does not imply sin, but it does imply liberty and freedom of will.—Z. '04: 7.

◇

Let us learn to recognize principles, whether operating in little things or in great ones, and that he who is faithful to right principle in small things, will be faithful in greater trials.—Z. '00:159.

◇

Alas for the poor sheep! How many may be expected to follow the pernicious ways of false shepherds! None too extravagant is the prophetic declaration, "A thousand shall fall at thy side"—only the sanctified in Christ Jesus, copies of God's dear Son, will be able to stand complete in him.—Z. '00:181.

Thousands will fall, from the only standing (in Christ) which has divine favor and recognition, on every side of those who abide under the shadow of the Almighty, rooted and grounded in the promises of God's Word, and firmly fixed upon the ransom, the rock of salvation. . . . When the Millennial Sun of Righteousness shall have arisen and scattered the mists of error, many now stumbling blindly will, we trust, be recovered; those, however, who have been granted the light of present truth, and who are cast out as unworthy of it, seem to be in a more serious condition—apparently in danger of the hopeless "second death."—Z. '96:17.

◇

Plainly we are told that God not only permits, but that he also desires, that the faith of his professed people should be severely tried. And if the thousands fall by these fiery darts of the enemy, it is because they are unworthy of the truth, not having received it in the love of it. Many indeed received the truth very much as a child receives a new toy.—Z. '96: 55.

◇

The true Christian servant (and all Christians must be servants if like their Master—Phil. 2:7) thus consecrated, realizes that under divine providence he is not to expect his rights in the present time, nor to strive for them; but that, on the contrary, he sacrifices them to the will of God—to the doing of the Lord's will so far as he may have opportunity, and to the having of the Lord's will done in him according to the Lord's wisdom and providence. If oppressed and dealt with unjustly, he will look to the Lord for deliverance, and whatever way it shall come will accept it as of divine arrangement; and whatever God does not provide in the way of deliverance along reasonable and just lines he will accept as the rulings of his providence, and render to the Lord thanks for his watch-care and seek to learn the lessons of patience and experience and longsuffering, which these trials may inculcate; recognizing in such a case that these trials, from whomsoever they come, are permitted of the Lord if not ordered by him, and intended for his welfare and spiritual development. Such Christian servants, and such Christians in any walk of life, are the only ones who know what contentment really is. Others are striving for the attainment of rights and for the correction of wrongs, and are only cultivating more and more the spirit of selfishness in their own hearts, and generally causing themselves the more trouble and discontent. Only the Christian can say,

> "Content, whatever lot I see,
> Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me,"

and he can only take this position by the exercise of a living faith, and can only exercise such a living faith in life's affairs after he has made a consecration of himself to the Lord, and can only make such a consecration of himself after he has come to some knowledge of the divine character and plan. Such servants, the Apostle assures us, adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. They show that it is not a doctrine of strife, but of peace and of good-will toward men, not a doctrine merely of personal rights and of selfish strife for their attainment, but a doctrine of love, joy and peace in the holy spirit.—Z. '00: 335.

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The Date of the Memorial Supper

As we all know, the Jews used the moon more than we do in the reckoning of their time. Each new moon represented the beginning of a new month. The new moon which came closest to the spring equinox was reckoned as the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, the first day of the month Nisan. On the fifteenth day of that month, the Feast of Passover of the Jews, lasting a week, began. That Feast of seven days represented the joy, the peace, the blessing, which resulted to the first-borns of Israel from their passing over, and typified the complete joy, peace and blessing which every true Christian experiences through a realization of the passing over of his sins through the merit of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. All true Christians, therefore, in their hearts have a celebration of this Feast of Passover continually—the completeness of the matter being represented in the seven days, seven being a symbol of completeness. Not seeing the matter from the same standpoint, the Jew thought less of the killing of the Passover lamb and the eating of that supper than he did of the week following it. But our Lord emphasized the importance of the killing of the Passover lamb when He announced Himself as its Antitype and when He invited us to celebrate His death on its anniversary, until, at His Second Coming, our entrance into the Kingdom would signify the complete fulfilment of all our blessings.

It would be a great blessing, doubtless, to many Christians if they could see this subject in its true light, could lay more weight upon the value of the death of Christ, and join more heartily in its celebration—on its anniversary, instead of at various other times and seasons, irregularly and without special significance. However, there have sprung up little groups of the Lord's people who are taking heed to this subject, and whose delight it is to celebrate the Master's death according to His request—"As often as ye do this"—annually—"do it in remembrance of Me." We believe that such a celebration brings special blessing to both heart and head. The nearer we come to the Divine requirements the greater is the measure of our blessing, the more closely are we drawn to our Master and Head, and to each other as members of His Body.

The date of the celebration this year will fall on March 22nd, after 6 p.m., because at that hour begins the 14th day of the month Nisan. We urge upon all of the Lord's people everywhere to gather as may best suit their convenience in little groups or families to do this in remembrance of our Lord's great sacrifice. The fact that it is the anniversary of His death makes the matter the more impressive. —Z. '15 : 70.

Matthew 4:5, 6

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

OTHER common forms of this temptation are: (1) Eating what you know does not agree with your system and asking God to bless it and keep you from experiencing its legitimate effects: (2) otherwise sowing to the flesh and asking God to give a crop of spiritual blessings; (3) from curiosity or other motives tampering with things known to be evils, and expecting blessings to result, —as, for instance, the reading of literature which you have proved to be off the true foundation, and praying God to keep you in the truth. These are temptings of God's providence, and as such should be put far away from every real child of God. "Hearken, and eat ye that which is good," instead of tempting God by eating that which is bad and praying and hoping for blessings from it.—Z. '94 : 254, 255.

CONVENTION

A Central Eastern Convention has been arranged to be held at Richfield, Wisconsin, on March 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, 1921, at which Bros. Palmer, Zinck and Edwards will serve. As it is not possible to arrange a series of Eastern Conventions at this time, the friends are urged to make a special effort to be at Richfield. We understand that a few of the friends at the Coast are expecting to be present.

The Richfield Ecclesia will supply all visiting friends with rooms and meals during the Convention.

For programmes and further information, please apply to Brother Wm. Dhein, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

The individual Christian exercises a preservative influence on others; wherever he may live he is a shining light dispelling the darkness of sin; he is the salt of the earth, preserving the mass from corruption.—Z. '02 : 74.

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Let all of the Lord's people examine themselves to see that their hearts are circumcised, separated from the will of the flesh and fully subjected to the will of God in Christ.—Z. '97 : 70.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD: AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

"Study to Show Thyself Approved"

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." —2 Tim. 2:15.

THIS TEXT does not say, "Study the Scriptures," but "Study **to show thyself approved**"—study to know what God would approve. And yet it means, first of all, to study **the Revelation He has made.** Then, after having come to some knowledge of the Scriptures, we must **meditate** upon them and consider how the Word is applicable to all of life's affairs. Thus we would study the nature of everything that we come in contact with, as to whether it is good or evil. The word **"study"** here is used with very much the same thought as when the Apostle says, **"Study to be quiet."**

Evidently the central thought of this expression is the approving of ourselves to God, not to men. It is proper enough that we should have the approval of all good men and good women. But our **study,** primarily, should not be along this line. First, we should **study to please God**—to be approved of God. We notice that there is a contemplative study, such as David speaks of when he says, "I meditate upon thy Law day and night"—to see how that Law would work out its height and depth, its length and breadth of influence upon himself. And so the Apostle's thought here is that it should be our chief aim to please God.

"Rightly dividing the Word of Truth" would signify the **proper application** of the Word of Truth; the understanding of how and when and where it should be applied and what was the purpose and thought and Plan of the Divine Mind in the giving of this Word of Truth, the Word of God's Message. Up to the advent of our Lord, God's Message had been given chiefly through the Old Testament Scriptures. Then God's Message was attested by Him who came from heaven. Additionally, our Lord left twelve chosen Apostles to be His special mouthpieces, to increase the Word of Truth, to increase the Word of knowledge, to increase the Word of explanation of the Divine Plan. Everything, therefore, that Timothy could recognize as being the Lord's Message he was to give heed to. For instance, one part of God's Message applies to the past, a part applies only to the Jews, still another part applies to Christians in the present life, and yet another part to their future hopes.

We Should Have Clearer Light Than Had Our Forefathers

And so, as we get the matter rightly divided before our minds, we get the true understanding, the special enlightenment needed in our day, and we are enabled to rightly divide the Word better than did our fathers, so that today we can see, as our fathers did not see, the teaching of God's Word respecting the "high calling" and "restitution"— the spiritual portion of blessing for the Church and the human portion of blessing for the world. We also see something about the times and seasons—**which** apply to the Church and **which** to the blessing of the world.

Thus, in our Day, to rightly divide the Word of Truth necessitates the taking cognizance of everything that seems to be of the Lord and that throws any light upon the Word, and thus we may be able to "rightly divide" it. We must always bear in mind that in the Scriptures of the **Old Testament** "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," and that the Lord also said of the **Apostles:** "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

We are not to forget that the Lord promised that He would guide His people in the way of the Truth and show them things to come. We are to "**study**" to show ourselves approved—**study** the doctrine and endeavor to have our course of conduct harmonize with it—**study** to perform faithfully the duties of a loyal soldier of the cross of Christ.

The Christian soldier must **study** to perform even the smallest duty in a manner creditable to his calling; he must not permit himself to become entangled with other things which do not relate to his duties as a soldier and thus be side-tracked. The Christian soldier who turns aside to seek some personal, temporal advantage to the detriment of his duties as a soldier is to that extent an unfaithful soldier and likely to be drawn out of the ranks entirely.

"**Study** to show thyself approved." Study the **Word**; study **yourself**, that you may become well acquainted **with yourself**; that you may know your talents for service—in what direction they lie, and what are your weak points and how they may be guarded against—that you may know both your abilities and your shortcomings. Then **study** to avoid error and to shun all foolish questions and profane and vain babblings. Remember that only "the foundation **of God standeth sure**"; that all other foundations are worthless and that all other theories must come to naught. But "The foundation **of God standeth sure**, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are **His**." And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—2 Tim. 2:19.

We Should Study to Make Our Imputed Righteousness More and More Actual

There is much significance in the word "**study**" and it is important to note that this Divine injunction is given to the **Church**, to those who are believers in Christ and who have consecrated their lives to His service. Having been reckonedly cleansed from sin, we are to give all diligence to the work of **studying** to make this reckoned cleansing, this **imputed** righteousness, an **actual** thing, to the extent of our ability. It is purely of Divine grace that we are **reckoned** righteous before we are **actually** so. Looking at our hearts and seeing in them, not only our good and honest intentions, but also our desire for righteousness and our efforts to become righteous in the way He would approve, God accepts the will for the deed. Accordingly, He **counts** us as righteous **now** and treats us as His children, since we have been redeemed from the curse and have accepted His gracious provision for reconciliation.

Let Us Study To See That Our Lives Are An Honor To the Cause We Espouse

Let us, then, **study** our hearts to see that we are striving daily to **cast out** all the old leaven of sin; to be sure that we are not content to allow it to **remain** in us and **work** in us; otherwise we prove by our course that our love for righteousness is growing weaker. Happy are those who find that they are not merely working down the leavened mass occasionally and allowing it again and again to ferment, but are **casting it out**, by constantly resisting sin, by cleansing their thoughts, words and deeds with the Truth and cultivating the blessed "fruits of the Spirit"—love, joy, peace, etc.

Only the **studious** find the way to Divine approval and acceptance. Let us **study** to see that our lives are an honor to the cause we have espoused; that we abstain from even the appearance of evil; that we are circumspect in all our conversation, in our conduct—watching our thoughts, our lips, our lives. Let us **study** to be diligent in every duty, performing it with a ready mind and with joy and gladness of heart. Let us never lose sight of the fact that we are **soldiers**, and that as true soldiers we are to learn to "endure hardness."

A soldier has many trivial duties to perform and he is as really doing his duty as a soldier when he is polishing his armor, foraging, cooking his meals, cleaning camp or building bridges for the army to pass over, as when he is fighting the enemy. Such things are incidental work, but are necessary and entirely consistent with his commission as a soldier and should not be regarded as entanglements and hindrances. These duties cannot be disregarded nor carelessly done without a measure of unfaithfulness.

Whatever Our Captain Has Recognized and Approved Is Proper for Us

So with the Christian soldier. The routine of life—housework, shop work, daily toil, anything, everything, incidental to a proper and honest provision of "**things needful**" for ourselves and those dependent upon us for support, as well as for provision for the prosecution and care of the Lord's work—all this is a proper part of our engagement as soldiers of the Lord.

The Apostle Peter was as truly serving the Lord when catching the fish from whose mouth he got the coin with which to pay his Master's taxes and his own, as when proclaiming, on the day of Pentecost, the "raising up" and ascension of the Lord. The Apostle Paul was as truly a soldier of the cross and doing his proper work as such when making tents (rather than be chargeable to any) as when at Mars Hill he preached Jesus and the resurrection. **Whatever** is done with a view to the glory and honor of our Lord, the Captain of our salvation, or for the benefit of any of our fellow-soldiers, or for our own **preparation** for this warfare, or in the discharge of obligations which our Captain has recognized and approved, is proper work for us as soldiers and is not **entanglement** in the affairs of this life.—Z. '11:183, 184.

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It is well that the Lord's people, especially when they come into trying positions on account of their fidelity to the truth, should remember the Master's words. Men may kill our bodies, or they may speak evil of them, or despitefully use them otherwise; but it is beyond their power to injure us as new creatures, or to ruin our prospects as respects the future life. That life which the Lord has promised to his faithful,—the resurrection life,—is beyond the power of man. It is the eternal, the invaluable life. If we gain it, **no matter what the cost may be, as respects the present life**, and mortal-body condition, we shall have made a great bargain, we shall have gained a great prize. All who really appreciate it see it to be a "pearl of great price," for which they, like the Master, are willing to lay down all,—to sell all that they have, that they may obtain it.—Z. '02: 45.

Self-Esteem's Advantages and Drawbacks

WHOEVER WILL CAREFULLY study the matter we believe will agree that a moderate amount of self-esteem is a great aid to success in the present life. It gives a self-confidence in respect to all of life's affairs, great and small. It impels its possessor to do and to dare to the full extent of his ability—if caution be lacking it may lead on to disastrous folly. But the lack of self-confidence, self-esteem, has held back thousands who otherwise might have been brilliant leaders in the path of progress.

Having pointed out some of the advantages of reasonable self-confidence we should point out some of the disadvantages of over-confidence—too great self-esteem. Its arrogance, its pride, its snobbishness, are disgusting and continually interfere with the progress of the unfortunate possessor. He never learns except by bitter experiences, because he always thinks he knows, and exposes his ignorance.

Some of the best people, the saintly, have small self-esteem, depreciate their own talents and exaggerate their own blemishes. Their humbleness of mind is a blessing when it leads them to God—to the Throne of Heavenly grace for forgiveness and for grace to help in every time of need. As between **too much** and **too little** self-esteem, therefore, our choice should be the latter.

"Let a Man Think Soberly"

Whether born with too much or with too little self-esteem, those who come into God's family are put into the School of Christ to be taught, corrected—made right, in harmony with Divine standards. Those naturally self-conceited must learn meekness—by instructions if they will—otherwise by experiences. And they should learn to **rejoice even in humiliating experiences.** They are evidences that God's providence is supervising their affairs and preparing them for the Kingdom; for without meekness and humility none will be fit for it.

As the self-conceited must learn humbly to trust God and not rely on themselves and thus secure balance, so the naturally self-depreciative must learn a lesson of confidence. Not **self-confidence**, not **self-reliance** is the most desirable, but rather **confidence in God** and reliance upon **His** promised "grace to help in every time of need." This maintains the desirable humility and meekness, yet gives the courage and force suggested by the Apostle's words: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13.) As St. Paul again declares, "Our sufficiency is of God!"

Thus inspired by faith in God and in His promises those "taught of God" become marvelously "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." (Eph. 6:10.) The righteous are strong as a lion, saying, "I will not fear what man may do unto me." (Psa. 118:6.) I will not heed what man may say of me or do to me. So long as I have the Almighty Creator for my Father and the Redeemer for my elder Brother I shall be content, relying on their "exceeding great and precious promises."

Thus, whether by nature self-conceited or humble, God's Word and providences in Christ tend to bring all followers of Christ to oneness of heart and mind. The one is humbled, the other exalted. Both learn not to trust in self or the arm of flesh, but in Him who is able to do for them exceedingly, abundantly, more than they could ask or think, according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here note the Apostle's exhortation that a man "think of himself not more highly than he ought, but think soberly," according to the measure of God's **grace** bestowed on him. (Rom. 12:3.) If any man has received none of God's grace, favor, mercy, forgiveness, surely it is not because he did not need it. Let him therefore feel his poverty without it. If any man has received much of God's grace it was because he needed it. He therefore may boast, but not of himself. His boast may well be in God who is thus working in him "to will and to do of His good pleasure."—Phil. 2:13.

Lack of Self-Appreciation

This deficiency operates in many ways not generally suspected. Many a man is a beggar or a thief simply because of a lack of self-appreciation. He thinks, I am nobody—and everybody knows it. He hangs his head in self-shame. He has a guilty look without having committed crime. He is treated according to his estimate of himself as expressed in his acts and looks, all of which reflect unconsciously his mental picture of himself.

When some, measuring him by his looks, declare: You are a mean man, a rascal, a thief, a scoundrel; I can see it—I can read you through and through! the effect is to thoroughly discourage him. Accepting the rating of his own brain and its reflection in the words of others he becomes rascal, scoundrel, thief. Few there are of benevolent heart to see the trouble of this class and sympathetically to give an encouraging word—to turn the scale and help bring forward the better qualities of the mind and heart.

It is here that the Gospel of Jesus does for such what nothing else could do. The Master's voice rings out in contrast with all other voices saying: Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and discouraged; I will give you rest. Ye shall find rest unto your souls!

Ah, the change! The discouraged one says, Then I am not beyond hope; not so mean, not so degraded that Jesus would pass me by. The very suggestion inspires new hope. If followed, it leads on and on to the riches of God's grace provided in Christ for the penitent, the willing, the obedient.

By the time such a man receives the begetting of the Holy Spirit and is able to cry, "Abba, Father!" old things pass away and all things become new. However, his fleshly weaknesses and unworthiness may still continually cry, You are unworthy; however, still in humility, he may acknowledge this with groans and tears, he is not cast down! He has God's assurance that he is a **New Creature** in Christ, whose perfect spirit body awaits him in the First Resurrection. He has the assurance that God knows of his fleshly weaknesses, and has made provision for his forgiveness through Christ, the Advocate. He has the assurance that it is not the flesh that God expects to perfect, but the New Creature, the heart, the will. He has the assurance that he is a son of God and a joint-heir with Christ in His great Messianic Kingdom, which soon is to bless the world. He has the assurance that all present trials of faith and patience and loyalty to God, to the Truth and to the brethren are permitted to test his heart-loyalty, without which he could not be a joint-heir in Messiah's Kingdom. These Divine assurances make strong the weak and give courage not only in respect to the future life, but also in the affairs of the present. No wonder the Bible speaks of the followers of Christ as **transformed** and **mind-renewed!**—Rom. 12:2.

In Respect to Physical Health

It may surprise some to learn that lack of self-confidence affects physical health as well as morals. Physiologists are agreed that the mind has much to do with the operation of all the human functions. The man deficient in self-esteem not only feels mean in respect to other affairs of life, but he lacks physical **tone,** snap, energy, so necessary to our best success in any avenue of life. . . .

But nothing will so thoroughly offset the burdens of life as the grace of God. Whoever receives the "wedding garment" no longer is so overwhelmed by the appearance of the filthy rags of his own unrighteousness. Whoever realizes that as a son of God and follower of the Savior he is an **ambassador** for God has no time specially to pamper and coddle his flesh, nor to make its care his paramount thought. He must be about his Heavenly Father's business! He must make use of his ambassadorship! He must "show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light!"

The effect of these new ambitions, hopes, aims, upon his physical health is often marvelous. "It serves as a spiritual nerve-tonic. It stimulates the mortal to service Divine. The new mind does not suggest carelessness of the mortal body—nor yet carefulness, except to the extent that necessary care may obtain the larger results to God's glory from the consumption of the human energies. Hence, as St. Paul says, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come."—1 Tim. 4:8; Z. '12:319, 320.

Feet-Washing as a Lesson in Humility

"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."—John 13:14.

WE REMEMBER the occasion on which our Lord washed the feet of His disciples. The Lord and His twelve Apostles had met in the upper room to commemorate the Passover Supper. This feast was followed by the inauguration of the Memorial Supper, the bread and wine of which represented the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus. The disciples, full of the enthusiasm which had been incited for some days previous, were all at a loss to understand the sadness of our Lord Jesus. While He was saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38) and desiring that His baptism might be accomplished, they were inclined to think that He was taking a pessimistic view of matters.

During the five preceding days the disciples had witnessed the feast in the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, the breaking of the alabaster box of ointment, the riding on the ass, and the spreading of palm branches for the little animal to walk on, and the demonstration of the people, who had cried, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9.) They had heard the Pharisees ask Jesus to put a stop to this demonstration. But He had said to them that if these people should hold their peace the very stones would cry out. (Luke 19:40.) To fulfil the prophecy (Zech. 9:9) there must be a **shout,** and there was a shout.

We remember that the little company went to the Temple, that the whole city was in commotion, that the rulers were impressed, and that they were afraid of the people. We remember that Jesus had gone into the Temple and had driven out those who sold merchandise; that when the Pharisees, the Sadducees and others tried to make Jesus appear confused, He had wisely turned all their arguments upon themselves; and that they dared not ask Him any more questions, for by so doing they would only make a bad matter worse.

From all these things it must have seemed to the Apostles that they were on the eve of attaining great prominence and that Jesus would be exalted. Therefore, they could not understand His attitude of sorrow. As an evidence, we have the fact that James and John went to Jesus and asked about the place they might occupy in the Kingdom. Could they be **next to Him?** There was no doubt in their minds that the Kingdom was near. They specially loved Him and would like to have the favor of being near Him. Others might not care so much where they were placed, but James and John would like to be **close to the Master.**

These were the thoughts uppermost in their minds. As a result, when they came to the upper room, they had not the humility of mind to take thought of serving. No doubt it was the custom of the Jews to have a **servant** to minister to the comfort of the guests. But there was no servant here and not one of them had the humility of mind to offer to be the servant. Apparently they not only did not have the disposition to serve one another, but they did not desire to wash even the Master's feet.

Selfishness Even in Love

Since it is difficult for us to gauge our own hearts thoroughly, we should use great charity in measuring the hearts and intentions of others, and should err on the side of too great sympathy and leniency rather than on that of too strong condemnation. Doubtless had the Apostles been asked as to their motives and conduct, they would have denied that these were selfish, and would have spoken only of their zeal for the Lord and their desire to be near Him. This illustrates to us what the Scriptures declare, that the human heart is exceedingly deceitful, and that it requires careful scrutiny, lest under the cloak of good motives, it harbor qualities which, if recognized, it would spurn.

Apparently our Lord let the matter go to its full limit to see whether or not any of His followers would improve the opportunity to make himself servant of all. He waited until supper was being served (not ended as in our common Version); then, arising from the table, He laid aside His mantle and got a basin and a towel. Then, girding up His garments to keep them from getting into the water, He proceeded to wash their feet.

We can well imagine the consternation of the Apostles as they watched the procedure, and then saw the Lord go from the feet of one to those of another, as they protruded from the couches on which the Apostles reclined. The method of feet-washing at that time was different from that of today. The water was poured from a pitcher in a small stream upon the feet, which were washed and rinsed. The basin was merely a receptacle for receiving the soiled water.

Our Lord's Act a Deep Spiritual Lesson

This act was a pointed reproof for their neglect to wash His feet and one another's. They were all silent until He came to St. Peter. When our Lord paused before him, St. Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" St. Peter had too much reverence to wish the Lord to be his servant. He had as a natural trait, more than had some of the others, that courage, or boldness, which led him to speak out. But the Lord said to him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." (John 13:8.) St Peter did not understand how this washing would give him a part with the Lord, but he said eagerly, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," if this gives me a more particular part with You. The Lord answered him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." I am doing all that is necessary. What I am doing you do not understand now, but you shall understand hereafter.—See verses 7-10.

In all this the Lord was giving a deep spiritual lesson—that no one is naturally fit for the Kingdom. Each one needs to be washed, to be cleansed, before he can be a joint-sufferer, before he can be a joint-heir. He must be a joint-sacrificer in order to become a member of The Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, You have witnessed My humility in this matter, and now I want to tell you that you ought to have this attitude toward one another. You should have been careful for even the humblest one in your number. Whether or not it was by washing My feet and those of all the others, you should have done whatever was necessary for the refreshment of the company.

The Act Not the Institution of a Ceremony

We are to remember that things were different then from what they are today. Because of the wearing of sandals, the feet would be considerably soiled even after only a short journey and would, therefore, need refreshing. It was the custom that the servant should come forth and make the guests comfortable—not to the inconvenience of the traveler, but to his further comfort. This was a menial service, which afforded Jesus the opportunity to impress upon His Apostles the lesson of the necessity of humility in all the members of the Body of Christ.

We do not get a lesson of the institution of a formal ceremony. It was only a case of necessity, of which the Lord took advantage to give a lesson of humility. No such need exists with us today. Our streets are paved and we wear shoes that are closely laced and are sufficient protection. So there is no necessity to wash each other's feet, at a public gathering, to have a public exhibition of feet-washing.

The incident affords a lesson in humility to us as well as it afforded one to the Apostles. We should be glad to do any service, even to the humblest of the members of Christ, in whatever way the opportunity may come. There is no suggestion in the Scriptures that feet-washing was ever done as a ceremony. We have an intimation, however, that feet-washing was a custom in Palestine. In 1 Tim. 5:9-16, we read that if a widowed sister had washed the saints' feet, meaning that if she had shown such a disposition, St. Paul would advocate a special care for such a sister in need; for she had manifested a loyal and true spirit.

There are some very good Christian people who have adopted feet-washing as a religious custom. We are not to berate them unnecessarily for following their consciences. Rather we should say to them that so long as they think they are doing the Lord's will, they are right to follow the custom; but that the Scriptures relate only this one case where the feet-washing was done in public, and it was very unlikely, therefore, that it was ever done in public by the Church except on this occasion. As the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has a deeper meaning than that one shall not take the life of another, so this washing of feet has a deeper meaning. Throughout His ministry Jesus indicated the deeper thought by His treatment of others; He lightened the burden and happified the condition of those with whom He came in contact. So we should do all in our power for the consecrated ones, members of Christ's Body.

Our Responsibility to One Another

This lesson suggests that the members of Christ's Body should have a mutual watch-care over one another's welfare; to keep each other pure, holy, clean and to assist one another in overcoming the trials, temptations and besetments of this present evil world, arising from the three sources of temptation—the world, the flesh and the Devil. Only as we cultivate the various graces of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love—can we hope to be specially helpful to others in putting on these adornments of character and purities of life, and in getting rid of the defilements of the world and of the flesh.

It requires peculiar qualifications to enable us to assist each other in this respect. Before we can help others to cleanse their way of life in every little particular, so that every thought, word and deed shall be brought into subjection to the Divine will, it is necessary that we have experience along the same lines. Only as we cultivate purity of thought, word and deed in our own lives, only as we put on the various graces of the Spirit, can we wash the feet of the saints.

Many who would reject well-meant criticism of conduct, who would resent well-meant offers of assistance to a higher standard of character, as interferences with their private business, would be very amenable to the influence of the same person if he approached them with such evidences of true devotion and loving interest as would be indicated by the performance of some menial act. It is the sympathetic ones who are most successful in helping the various members of the Body of Christ out of the besetments and difficulties incident to the following of the Lord in the present time. Oh, let us study and strive and pray that we may be very successful in obeying the Master's injunction, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet!"

How many opportunities we have for comforting, refreshing, consoling and assisting one another in some of the humblest affairs of daily living or in respect to some of the unpleasant duties, experiences or trials of life! By love we are to serve one another, but not as a mere formality. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, has, we may be sure, the approval of the Head of the Church.

Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example. Let us not merely assume the guise of humility, but let us actually have that grace of character which will enable us to do kindnesses and service to all with whom we come in contact. Then we shall all the more enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Body of Christ—The Christ.—Z. '12: 273-275.

Righteous and Unrighteous Anger

"Love is not easily provoked."—1 Corinthians 13:5.

IN THE chapter from which our text is taken, St. Paul sets forth the prime necessity for the cultivation and development of Love, without which, whatever else we may attain, we shall be nothing in the sight of God. The Apostle tells us in the words of our text, that love is not easily provoked. Evidently he uses the word **provoke** here in a very different sense from its meaning where he says that we should "consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works." (Hebrews 10:24.) The thought in the latter text is to incite to good works, to call forth love in others, to exert an influence favorable to righteousness. The thought in our present text, however, is that of being excited, or roused, to anger. St. Paul declares that love is not easily thus aroused, but is long-suffering.

We might say, strictly speaking, that it is not the quality of Love itself that would ever be moved to anger. Yet righteous anger—a just indignation aroused by our love for the principles of righteousness—is not incompatible with love. "God is Love," and the Scriptures assure us that He "is angry with the wicked every day." His anger is righteous indignation against sin.

God's Righteous Anger

Looking to God as our great Example, we see that His Love was manifested on behalf of His human creatures in the beginning. It was love for humanity that provided the Garden of Eden with all its blessings and its perfect life, just as His love for the angels had provided all their blessings. But when Sin came in, Love stepped back; or in other words, Justice was the special attribute of God then manifested. It was better for mankind that there should be this punishment for sin; for from the foundation of the world God, foreknowing man's fall, had purchased his redemption. So even in the sentence of Death His love for man persisted. But God is the opponent of sin, and when His Law was violated, Love, or He who is the embodiment of Love, was provoked to righteous anger.

God's indignation was likewise kindled against His chosen people, the Jews, when He said to the Prophet (Jeremiah 8:19), "Why have they provoked Me to anger?" Many Scriptures speak of God's anger. That anger has ever burned against sin. It has been resting upon the world for six thousand years. But the Love of God has in no way been violated by this attitude against the condemned world. Therefore, Love can be justly provoked to anger. He who declares that Justice is the foundation of His Throne never indulges in sentiments which are not in the fullest harmony with that Justice. But He has arranged for the recovery of this condemned race. The Love of God has made this provision for His fallen creatures.

God's Love Held in Abeyance

But love is not easily provoked, not unjustly provoked. It required an act of **intentional disobedience** on the part of Father Adam to provoke God to anger. It was not because Mother Eve was deceived that the sentence came upon the world. The anger of God came upon mankind and the sentence of death was pronounced because of Father Adam's sin, which was committed with full knowleage. And during all these six thousand years of sin God's Love has been held in abeyance, so to speak, provoked to the point of withdrawal.

But all the while God's character has not changed. He did not cause the diabolical conditions which have existed since the fall of man. Neither Love nor Justice, as embodied in Jehovah, would sanction sin; "The wages of Sin is death." (Romans 6:23.) And everything that goes with death as its natural result is a part of that penalty. But God has permitted these conditions, knowing that by His Power they would all be overruled for the ultimate good of mankind. The great Adversary of God is responsible for the disaster which Sin has wrought upon the earth. But the Almighty will yet cause the wrath of Satan to work out good for the children of men, ultimately crushing, annihilating, the great Enemy of righteousness.—Hebrews 2:14.

The Love of God, thus held in abeyance, has bided its time, to be revealed to astonished man when the due time shall have come. Nearly two thousand years ago Love manifested itself on behalf of the world, when God sent forth His Only-Begotten Son to be man's Redeemer. He came to earth and gave His life—a willing sacrifice for human sin. Then the call went forth to gather the Church, the class who were in God's Purpose to be the Bride of His Son, to be associated with Him in the great future work for the race of Adam. During this Gospel Age, this Church is being gathered, and in due time will be exalted in Kingdom glory. Then God's love will manifest itself to our race. The Kingdom of God will lift up mankind from sin and degradation and death, into the light and glory of the Lord—all who are willing to accept life on God's terms.

Special Crises in Christian Life

How earnestly we as children of God should watch and pray that we may indeed be fitted for our great future work—now so near! There is a danger that love will not be sufficiently strong in us; for by reason of the fall, sin and selfishness have come to be preponderating influences in the world. These, operating for six thousand years, have made man very deficient in love, sympathy, brotherly-kindness and long-suffering. Now there is a greater tendency toward anger, malice, hatred, strife, than toward love. Consequently, when God accepts us into His family, He tells us that one of the first requirements is **love**. Love must grow in our hearts and minds, and permeate all our thoughts, words and actions.

Our fallen flesh, helped on by the unseen "powers of the air," will seek to prevent our attaining this necessary condition; and after we have **attained it**, strong pressure will at times be brought to bear upon us as New Creatures to induce us to withdraw from this position. From time to time the child of God has experiences with others of the brethren that seem to threaten his spiritual health, or even his spiritual life. The powers of darkness assail him, endeavoring to encourage the feelings and sentiments which he is strongly tempted to adopt. He has come to a crisis in his Christian experience. He must go forward or backward. He cannot stand still. The struggle is on. Will this severe trial prove a stepping-stone to lift him nearer God, or will it be a stone of stumbling, to overthrow him?

At such crucial times, the only refuge is prayer. The Lord permits these very trials to test our mettle as children of God. The Adversary will endeavor to place the matter before our agitated minds in the most unfavorable light as regards the brother or sister. He will seek to pervert the judgment, and to deceive the mind as to the real facts in the case; and our flesh responds to this view of the matter. The only safe course is to refuse to entertain in the slightest degree the thoughts of bitterness trying to find a lodgment in our mind and heart, and to cry at once to the Lord for strength and help in our time of need, seeking counsel of His Word bearing upon our proper attitude in such an emergency. Let us remember the words of the hymn we have often sung:

"Yield not to temptation,
  For yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you
  Some other to win.
Fight manfully onward,
  Dark passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
  He'll carry you through."

"Forgive, and Ye Shall Be Forgiven"

Let us, then, be kind and forbearing one with another, brethren, seeking to put the kindest construction upon the words, the actions and the natural tendencies of one another, remembering our own peculiarities and foibles. Let us remember that each of us is blemished by the fall, and that those of the brethren who try us most may have had hereditary tendencies and environments in earlier life of which we are not aware, and which would make us very pitiful if we knew. Let us remember also that **we** may be altogether unaware of some of our own weaknesses and mannerisms, which may grate upon others. We should be much more careful to note our own mistakes and faults than those of other brethren of the Lord.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger [fleshly anger], and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"—and still forgives you. (Ephesians 4:31, 32.) "Put on, therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have occasion of complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on **love**, which is the **bond of perfectness.** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are also called in one Body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."—Colossians 3:12-16.

After the child of the Lord has gained the victory in a struggle like this, and has through prayer and determined effort brought the Arm of God to his deliverance, he is a stronger Christian than before the trial came. He has taken a stride forward in the narrow way; he has taken a firmer hold on God, and will be the better enabled to conquer in the next testing. But every failure to thus overcome leaves the child of God weaker and less able to resist the onslaught of his flesh and of the Adversary and his evil host, and the less sure of being a final overcomer.

In speaking of love as respects the Church of Christ, the Apostle assures us that if we would be pleasing to the Lord we must develop richly this grace. Those who possess this quality in goodly measure will not be easily provoked to anger, will not readily take offense, will not be too watchful lest their rights and their dignity be infringed upon. Those who have little love will be easily angered and offended. Let us keep self down, and diligently continue the work of its crucifixion, looking ever to Him from whom cometh our help. The love which our Lord appreciates is longsuffering. This does not mean that there would never be occasions for just indignation, righteous anger. There should be a feeling of righteous anger when we see great injustice. Why? Because injustice is wrong. God is angry with injustice, when it is committed knowingly, or willingly. And so God's people should have no sympathy with injustice.

Love Superadded to Justice

If the children of God do not carefully cultivate the quality of justice, they will get themselves into that attitude where they will not appreciate justice at all. But while appreciating what is right and what is wrong, we are to go further, and see that we cultivate diligently the quality of love, sympathy, charity. None can say that his own estimate of what constitutes justice and love is entirely right, and that the other man's estimate is entirely wrong, especially when this other is a brother or sister in Christ, seeking to develop the same Christlike qualities as ourself. Our viewpoints cannot be always the same; therefore let us not be too sure that our own viewpoint is the correct one, and the other view wrong, where there is any possibility of our being mistaken.

No follower of Christ is so well developed that he can say, I do not need any further instruction along the lines of justice and love, but my brother needs it. And in our experiences with the brethren where the other one seems to be at fault, let us say to ourselves, Here is a brother who perhaps has had more disadvantages than I have had. He is a brother of mine according to the Spirit. He seems to me to be doing wrong, but I sympathize with him because he probably does not know that his action is wrong. Or I may be wrong myself. If he saw the matter from my viewpoint, he would do differently. I will not judge him, but leave that for the Almighty, who is infallible in judgment and to whom judgment belongs.—1 Corinthians 4:5.

Sympathy for All Men

God has no sympathy with **sin**; but He has so much sympathy for sinners that He has provided His well-beloved Son to redeem and uplift the sinner. He has set apart a thousand years for this work of human uplift. We note injustice; we ought to note it. But it is not our province to flay, to inflict punishment. We are to "judge nothing before the time." We see acts committed that shock our moral sense. We are to say to ourselves, I believe that act to be criminal; but it is not for me to settle with that wrong-doer. God knows to what extent the individual is responsible; I do not. It is my duty as far as possible to view him from the standpoint of sympathy. It is my duty to assist him if it is in my power, if I have a proper opportunity—to help him out of his wrong views into right views. But even in this I am to be "wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove." The conduct is wrong, but I cannot know how wrong the individual may be.

So Love looks out and sees that the whole world is in much difficulty through the fall. And Love says, Be gentle toward all; be meek; be forbearing. We are ever to remember that we are in a world of sin, pain, sickness, death. From this viewpoint, Love will not be easily provoked, but will think kindly and sympathetically of others. Thus, beloved, shall we grow up into Christ, our glorious Head, in all things, until, made perfect and complete through His grace, we shall be presented to the Father "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."—Ephesians 5:27; Z. '15:5-7.

The Life-Rights of the Ancient Worthies

RIGHT TO LIFE is one thing, but **right to eternal life** is another. Adam had the **right to live**, which would have been eternal if by **obedience** he had demonstrated his **worthiness** to live forever. So with the Ancient Worthies; when raised from the dead they will have the right to live, but only through the Mediator. They will not have life-rights of their own, for there are no such rights except those which are recognized by the Father and Justice. The Apostle Paul tells us that already the Ancient Worthies have the Divine approval. But although they pleased God, He did not give them eternal life; and although they shall please the Mediator, He will not turn them over to the Father, to Justice, until the end of the Millennial Age.

The Scriptures say also that **all live** unto God (Luke 20:38), for from His standpoint they only sleep. (See Deut. 31:16; John 11:11, etc.) Not the Ancient Worthies alone, but the rest of the world live unto God in the same sense, although they were not counted **acceptable** to Him. He has made provision for them through the Mediator, but that provision will not be complete until the end of the Millennial Age. The Ancient Worthies, approved of God, had this testimony, that they "pleased God," in that they came up to the standard —perfection of heart-intention and obedience to the extent of ability. While He approved them, nevertheless they did not have eternal life given them nor was any right to eternal life recognized.

God has, however, made provision whereby all of Adam's race will be redeemed and have the **opportunity** of gaining eternal life. This provision will, of course, include not only the Ancient Worthies, but also the remainder of mankind.

Life Through the Mediator

This arrangement made by God is not, however, outside of the Mediator, for through the Mediator alone will mankind, including the Ancient Worthies, obtain eternal life. (The only exception to this provision of the Mediator is the Church Class, who come to the Father through Christ's acting as their Advocate.) Hence the Ancient Worthies cannot come by any different route. They must be recognized of the Father through the Mediator; for since they are not joint-heirs with Christ, they must come in under the other class, during the period in which the Mediator will deal with the world as a whole. The process of dealing with the world as a whole will go on, and not until the end of the Millennium will The Christ deliver any of them over to the Father.

The Lord Jehovah has made a plan by which he can, through His Son, deal with mankind. That plan is that "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (John 5:22.) Hence the Father, aside from His Son, did not judge the Ancient Worthies. But they may expect a blessing in God's own time and season—in "due time"—when Messiah will have taken His power and begun His reign; and particularly at the end of that reign, when the Son shall have delivered up the Kingdom to the Father.—1 Cor. 15:24.

The Father is not taking any cognizance of this arrangement for the blessing of the world, but is leaving it all for the great Messiah, who will be their Mediator, their great High Priest, making reconciliation, mediation. When the mediation, arranged for from before the foundation of the world, shall have been accomplished, it will be satisfactory to the Ancient Worthies, who will have been "rulers in all the earth," and to mankind as a whole.

Ancient Worthies Under the Mediator

The question as to whether the Ancient Worthies will have life-rights when they come forth, may be viewed from different standpoints. According to the teaching of the Scriptures, whoever is **perfect** is worthy of eternal life. We understand the Scriptures to teach that the Ancient Worthies will come forth from the tomb perfect, lacking nothing. We would be inclined to say, then, that being perfect they would come within the Divine arrangement that whoever is perfect shall live. But we must remember that God is the Judge of all. (Heb. 12:23.) Yet, even so far as the Ancient Worthies are concerned, they will not have direct dealings with God during the Millennial Age. Personally, **they** will be ready thus to deal; but God in His wisdom has seen fit to deal with them through the Redeemer, the Prophet or Teacher, the Priest, the Mediator of the whole world of mankind. And since the whole world of mankind is not ready to be turned over to the Father, the Ancient Worthies must wait until the remainder are delivered over into the hands of the Father, the Great Judge of all.

At the end of the Millennium, the whole world of perfected humanity will be turned over to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:24.) As soon as He accepts them they will stand in the same position in which Adam stood when He was perfect. But as Adam was required to be tested, so the whole world of mankind will be tested in that same condition of perfection in which Adam was. Divine Justice must test their **worthiness** of life eternal before it will be granted.

Second Rank in the Work of Salvation

The various statements regarding the Ancient Worthies all give the impression that, by their **voluntary course**, they reached the point where they were pleasing to God. And the Apostle Paul declares that these Ancient Worthies all **died** in faith, not having received the blessing of eternal life, because God had some better thing for us, the Church, that they **without us** should not be **made perfect**. (Heb. 11:13, 39, 40.) In other words, while they had the testimony that they pleased God, they are not to have **first rank**, but **second**, in the work of salvation. They could not receive their blessing, their perfection, until, in the outworking of the Divine Plan, Messiah has taken His Kingdom and His Bride has been perfected. Then they shall have their restitution blessings.

The fact that the Apostle says also that the Ancient Worthies desired "a better resurrection," implies that the resurrection given to them will be better than that given to the remainder of mankind, in that they will be worthy of having perfection of life at the time of first coming forth from the tomb, while the resurrection of the others will be **gradual** after they come forth. "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets"—all the Ancient Worthies—will be awakened from death fully restored to human perfection; and will not require a "resurrection by judgment," a thousand years long, as will the residue of mankind.

These Ancient Worthies will come back in exactly the same condition that Adam was before the fall; but they will have the advantage of greater experience than he had. Adam was perfect; these will be perfect. Adam had **no experience** with sin; these will have had **much experience** with sin. These experiences tended to develop character; that is to say, they brought about a favorable determination in respect to righteousness; the testing that came to them was to demonstrate their obedience to God, their loyalty to His will. To maintain this loyalty many of them laid down their lives.

While these Ancient Worthies will have neither part nor lot in the Spiritual Kingdom, because not called thereto—that high, or "Heavenly calling" not being possible until after the Ransom had been laid down by our Lord Jesus—yet they will occupy a position of preferment above the world, having attested their faith and love during the reign of evil, in a manner approved of God. Thus they were prepared and proved worthy to be the earthly ministers and representatives of the Spiritual Kingdom. In harmony with this it is written by the Prophet David, as addressed to **The Christ**—"Instead of [being longer considered] Thy fathers [they] shall be Thy children, whom Thou mayest make Princes [chief ones, captains] in all the earth."—Psa. 45:16.

The resurrection of these Ancient Worthies will also be "better" than that of the remainder of mankind in that they were tried severely during their life and received a "good report through faith," and will have attained the reward of that faithfulness. They will be perfect men, having completely restored to them all that was lost in Adam—mental and moral likeness to God, and perfection of physical powers.

Elements of Character-Development

If these Worthies of the past have had large experience with sin and have proved themselves faithful in that they remained loyal to God, even unto death, why should they not receive **life-rights** as well as **perfection of life** at once? Why should they be obliged to wait until the end of the Millennial Age for recognition by Jehovah, instead of receiving it at the beginning? The answer is that God has included the whole world in the Mediatorial work of Messiah, as He has included all the Church in the preparatory work of the Royal Priesthood, through the great Advocate, the Redeemer; and the Mediator's work will continue for a thousand years. Hence, all who come under that work will be obliged to wait for the end of that Epoch before the recognition of any of them will be effected.

The Ancient Worthies "had this testimony that they pleased God." They pleased Him in that when they ascertained His will they set about doing it, even before He gave it to them as a Law, or obligation, even before He could ask them to obey Him and promise them eternal life for their obedience. Abraham, one of these, manifested his faith in God although there was no redemption yet accomplished in the world. Christ had not yet come. And although Abraham was uot on trial for life or for death, God granted him His favor and declared that he **pleased Him.** He and all those Ancient Worthies will have this resurrection to human perfection. But since human perfection—to the world of mankind—will come only under the Mediatorial reign of Christ, the Ancient Worthies cannot be introduced to the Father until the close of the Millennial Age.

Hence they will not have life in its fullest sense until the time when at the close of the Millennial Age the Kingdom shall have been delivered over to the Father. What they will have in the meantime—during the thousand-year period—will be perfection of human nature and all the blessings that God provides for mankind through the great Mediator.

Established Character Necessary

If perfection of **organism** makes **character,** then Adam was perfect in this respect. He was created perfect in mind and body. His mind was in the image of God; no blemish was there, no preference for sin, but the reverse of this: he had an appreciation of righteousness and a tendency toward it; he was all that would constitute a **good** man, for **God so made him.**

In another sense, Adam never had perfect character; that is, he had no character **developed, tested and proved.** God tried him, and because of his inexperience he failed, even though his character was good and his organism perfect. He failed in the very first feature of his trial. So we might wonder in what manner the Ancient Worthies received any testing which would constitute a full proof of character. When we examine the records of these men we find that they manifested great faith, and that they endured some severe ordeals and testings of their loyalty to God and their confidence in Him. It does not surprise us, then, that the testimony that they pleased God was given respecting them. This assures us that they had considerable character development. God must have seen their **hearts** to be very loyal, else He never would have considered them worthy of a better resurrection. Yet we believe they will have need of further experience and testing.

These Ancient Worthies will not be begotten of the Holy Spirit, as is the Church; but we are informed that **"after those days"** God will "pour out His Spirit upon **all flesh.**" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17.) The Ancient Worthies lived prior to the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, therefore, if they receive any measure of this blessing to come upon "all flesh," it must be in the future, and the giving of the Holy Spirit to them will have much to do with fixing, establishing, crystallizing their already perfect characters. They will be brought to greater knowledge, and having already endured severe testings and having proved their thorough heart-loyalty, they will have to learn only how to use their talents and powers in fullest conformity to the Divine will.

While this class will be **mortal** and hence liable to death, it is almost unthinkable that any of these would come short of eternal life. Men who have stood crucial tests under conditions of ignorance and superstition, who have endured temptation from the world, the flesh and the Adversary, and proved loyal under such conditions, would, it is only reasonable to suppose, maintain their perfection under the more favorable conditions of the Millennial Age.

It is not probable that they would make mistakes; but if, upon their awakening, they should be at once turned over to Jehovah, and, as in Adam's case, the slightest deflection would mean **death,** we can see that their position would be much less favorable than it will be under the New Covenant arrangement during the Millennial reign of Christ. This is a very gracious arrangement for their best interests, for any possible mistake would be covered by Christ's mediation and not bring them under sentence of death.

The history of some of these Ancient Worthies is very meager and does not always imply that they were "overcomers" in the sense in which the Church is to be. Take, for example, the case of Samson, who is mentioned as one of these Ancient Worthies. The last we read of Samson, still in the hands of the Philistines, is that he was still loyal to God and prayed for the opportunity of serving God's cause; the Lord granted his prayer, permitting him to push down the pillars of the building in which he was making sport for the Philistines; they were the middle pillars upon which the house stood, and in its fall more than three thousand of the enemies of the Israelites were killed along with himself.

Faith seems to have been the chief element of character that was developed under Samson's experiences. We do not know how much patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, gentleness, meekness, etc., were developed in his character; nothing is stated in regard to the matter and we have no reason to suppose that Samson was a very gentle man. Indeed, we have never thought of gentleness and meekness as being amongst his characteristics. The slaying of one thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass, as well as other experiences of his, would not seem to indicate this.

We may reasonably suppose, therefore, that although Samson will be brought back in an absolutely perfect condition, and under the favorable environments of the Millennial Age, there will probably be experiences in life that he never encountered and that will be so new to him that he might be in danger of making mistakes. Assuredly he will have much to learn respecting the things of the Spirit of God, in the days of the blessing of "all flesh."

Summing up, we would say, The Ancient Worthies will not come into actual and personal relationship to God, so as to be determined worthy of eternal life, until the completion of the Millennial Age, because that Age is set apart for the very purpose of determining who of all mankind may have eternal life—aside from the spirit-begotten ones of the present time. At the close of the Millennial Age, when all mankind shall have reached perfection of being, they shall be tried of the Father for their **worthiness** or **unworthiness** of eternal life—just as Adam, while enjoying perfection, was tested as to whether or not he was worthy to have his life made perpetual.

Since the Ancient Worthies will be a part of the world under the New Covenant arrangements, it follows that they will not have the decision of the Divine Court, Divine Justice, respecting their worthiness of eternal life, until the completion of the Millennial Age, until the conclusion of the trial at the end of that Age, which will bring to them, as it will bring to all others who are faithful, the great reward of life eternal.—Z. '12: 243, 245.

The Binding of the Strong Man

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:2.

WE believe that there is a personal Devil and that he will be literally restrained in some manner; but in the expression in the above text it seems that the names "Devil" and "Satan" refer not merely to the person of the Adversary, but to all that system of things of which he has stood as the representative or head or center; for instance, in Revelation 12: 7-9, a great religious system is apparently spoken of as the Devil.

As to when this binding began, and how it will proceed, and when it will end, the Lord's parable respecting the binding of the "strong man" seems to imply that it will begin in a sudden manner. He says that if that "strong man" knew at what time the thief would come he would watch and not suffer his house to be broken up. He thus intimates that Satan would not know at what time the catastrophe would come upon him and his arrangements and that therefore he would be taken somewhat at a disadvantage.

As to what constitutes the "house" of this "strong man" would be another matter. His "house" here would stand for his household, which at the present time would include the fallen angels. These fallen angels, who have been subject to Satan as their prince, will in some sense of the word be thrown out of harmony with him. The time at which we might expect this would be in the second presence of our Lord, and it would seem that, from about the time of our Lord's **parousia**, disorder began to operate in Satan's household and that these different endeavors that we see in many quarters to carry out certain schemes more or less antagonistic the one to the other, might be the result of this disorganization. It would further seem that there are different bands of evil spirits working upon humanity. These various hostile bands may work a great deal of havoc, perhaps equally as much as could have been done had they all remained in organized relationship to Satan himself. But still the undermining or overthrow of his authority, seems to be in progress. We believe that every advance step of light and knowledge is that much of a restraint upon darkness and evil and superstition. We properly enough speak of the chains of superstition, the chains of darkness, which bound mankind for a long time; and very properly we say that these are of the Adversary.

Now, have we anything to indicate that **light** will serve as a "chain"? Did we ever hear of light being a chain? We answer that there has never yet been a manifestation of that kind. There is nothing in the past operation of light that served as a chain, but it seems that now it should operate thus. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is **light**," and that which makes manifest is a "chain," is a restraint upon that which is **darkness**. So here are the two —**light** and **darkness**; the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness. The Prince of Light has only recently invaded, as it were, the land of the Prince of Darkness to commence his work. This work is first, chiefly in the Church and in the restraining of the "winds" and the "powers" and the troubles coming upon the world; but meantime the whole world is getting awake, not necessarily to the light of **truth**, but getting awake to the chains of darkness which are upon them and of which they are striving to rid themselves. We might notice as an example the Higher Critics and Agnostics in large numbers in the high places. Many of the most intelligent people of the whole world have arrayed themselves, not on the side of Satan to do some evil work, but in opposition to all the darkness and blindness. They have not, indeed, the "true light" as we have it, but they are exercising an influence that is antagonistic to the darkness that Satan has heretofore used for the restraint of thought, etc. We will not say that Satan is not operating to quite an extent through these various evil agencies, but we do believe that these agencies are not willingly being operated upon by Satan; but, as they strive to become loose from him and his power, they go to another extreme and he seeks, as far as he is able, to corral them again and hold them with some other form of error.

It seems to be clear that in this time in which we are living, and since the presence of the Lord, great influences have been let loose in the world that are breaking many of the shackles of superstition and ignorance. These influences are not merely those that are being exerted amongst the consecrated, but we refer chiefly to those influences which are being exerted amongst those with whom we cannot be in accord—the "Higher Critic" class. We believe they are doing a great deal to restrain the Adversary and his authority over the people, etc.

In connection with the binding of Satan we read that he shall be "bound for a thousand years, that he might deceive the nations no more till the thousand years be finished"—implying that deception was one of the main things in which he had been previously engaged and that henceforth he would be so restrained or disabled, whether by the light of "Present Truth," or by light of science, or whatever it might be, that he would not be able to deceive the world in the same manner as formerly.

We believe that the restraining of his influence is in operation. As we look about the world we see that many of the various inventions, etc., are apparently being put to good use. The telephone, the telegraph, etc., for instance, are not generally used for wicked purposes. They are used for good purposes, or at least for business purposes. In many cases where the attempt has been made to use the telephone and telegraph for gambling, the State laws have stepped in and forbidden the use of wires for such purpose. In respect to the temperance question, also, we see that enlightenment is proceeding and people are making rapid advancement in the knowledge that alcoholic liquors are dangerous.

And so the education of the world goes rapidly on. People are no longer allowed to be vicious or idle. Children are compelled to attend school; the truant officer looks them up if they are derelict. The knowledge that is spreading is wonderful. And the thought that practically all this is being accomplished by the world itself, and that we have little or nothing to do with it, makes it appear still more wonderful. This work is being done by people who do not believe in the true religion; they do not know God aright; the majority of them, so far as we can gauge their own testimony, repudiate the Bible. They believe in a vague way in a God of some kind, perhaps in a fanciful God, found in every stone and piece of wood. Nevertheless they are free from the shackles of the darkness of the past and apparently have no desire to go back, but forward. It would appear, then, that all of the things peculiar to our day in the way of restraining error are part of the binding of the Adversary. . . .

As to the question when the great Adversary's binding will be accomplished, we believe that it will not be brought about until the time that the "great company" class is completed. It would not surprise us if Satan would make a great commotion in the world all through the time of trouble. It does not seem that all that terrible trouble will come about without the Adversary. We think he would enjoy being in the fray, such as we expect it to be —world wide, "when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."—Z. '10:154, 155.

This Looks Reasonable

Dear Brother Russell:—

WHILE reading the article in May 1 Tower, entitled "The Binding of the Strong Man," certain further conclusions presented themselves to my mind; but they were of such a startling character that I have refrained from mentioning they to a single soul, as I would not for all the world wish to promulgate an idea that had any measure of error in it. However, the more I have thought over it the more has it impressed me as correct. It is herewith submitted for your consideration. If you can discern anything unscriptural in it I shall drop the matter altogether, as it is far better to suppress a questionable truth than run the risk of propagating a possible error.

The Lord has permitted the Church in these last times to be blessed with such an abundance that it makes us tremble lest we might be instrumental in the circulation of some one of the many forms of unscriptural teaching, thus assisting in marring in our own mind, and in the minds of others, the beautiful harmony of the Divine Plan. How the Truth has made us love our Lord, and how grievous it would be if we were to find that in any way we have encouraged that which did not properly represent him!

The article referred to suggests the thought that just as there is a Christ company, the Church, the Body of Christ, and then an individual Christ, who is the Head of the Body, even Jesus, so likewise there is a Satanic company, a System over which the Devil is head, as well as the individual Satan, Beelzebub, the "Chief of Devils."

In that article you remind us that during the last thirty-five years there has been considerable evidence that a work of restraint has been going on in this great "system of which Satan has stood as the representative or head." You there point out how much evidence we have of the gradual binding of this system of things in the Prohibition movement. and we saw how the light along all lines was the agency being used of the Lord in the accomplishment of this binding or restraining of some of the things connected with the evil system. However, you made it plain that you did not refer to the binding of the individual Devil, but to the binding of the satanic organization.

But right here I thought of the words of our Lord in Matthew 12:29, to which your article also refers, "How can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." According to this, if the Lord were to bind the Strong Man, Satan, before he began to spoil his house, and if we see reason to believe that the house is being spoiled already, then must we not conclude that the personal Devil has been bound for some time? May it not be that part of the work accomplished by our invisibly present Master between 1874 and 1878 was the binding of the Wicked One? One of our Lord's first experiences after his baptism 1800 years ago was with Satan, and how likely that one of his first experiences at his second coming would be with the same Adversary!

If the question is asked, Where, then, if Satan is now bound, do all our temptations come from? I answer, from the fallen spirits who were once under the control of Satan. For some cause, possibly the fact that he had been a being of a higher order than they, Lucifer appears to have had power over the other angels that had fallen, which they could not successfully resist; so if they were ever to be brought back into harmony with God it would be necessary for them to be set free from the bondage they were in to their leader, Satan.

In Hebrews 1:6, we find that all the other translations give quite a different thought from that in the King James translation; even the margin of the authorized version gives the correct thought. The Revised Version says, "And when he again bringeth in the First-Born into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." This would, to my mind, seem to imply that when our Lord would come into the world the second time, one of the things he purposes is to give the fallen angels a chance to prove whether they are willing to become angels of God once more, and one of the ways whereby they might demonstrate that they are sick and tired of the service of the Devil is to acknowledge the authority of the One who has now returned to be King of earth, by worshipping and obeying him. On the contrary, those of them who would continue in sympathy with the evil principles of their wicked master, would simply use the increased liberty that would come to them through the binding of Satan, to introduce new forms of wickedness.

During the ages in which they served Satan, no doubt many wicked ideas apart from their leader occurred to them, but as he had his own idea of how his kingdom should be run, they were not allowed to have their own way. But now Satan's restraint has given them the occasion wished for, and would account for the great diversity of spiritualistic phenomena, compared with that of former times.

I cannot see how the fallen angels could have a fair trial as long as Satan was at liberty to coerce them to do his bidding, as seems to have been the case in the past.

If Satan is now bound, it would also teach another lesson: Many have the idea that in order to bring all the iniquity in the world to an end, it is merely necessary to bind the great Author of Sin. when things would naturally readjust themselves in harmony with the will of God. But the fact that after the binding of the Evil One things would in some respects be even worse than they were before, resulting in the worst time of trouble that had ever been, would prove to all the universe that sin is not merely such an awful thing because Satan was here to direct things, but that the real cause of the trouble was sin, whether there was an archangel behind it, or one of the lower order of angels, or simply a man; that sin is the terror, with Satan or without him; that sin is the cursed thing. . . .

Now, dear Brother, if you have anything that even half-way looks like proof that I am wrong in these suggestions, I think it would be better for me to drop it altogether, as far as presenting these things to others is concerned, as we cannot afford to risk stumbling our brethren with a doubtful interpretation.

Praying the Lord's continued direction in all your affairs, as you seek to pour out the little strength and time that remain to you, in the service of the Lord of the Harvest, I remain,

Your Brother and servant in the cause which seeks the Glory of our Lord,

Benj. H. Barton.
—Z. '10:315, 316.

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Our brethren on the spirit plane are nearest to us of any. Whoever is a New Creature, and thus a brother to all those who are New Creatures, is not merely to observe the Golden Rule, but is to be ready to do toward any and all of the brethren as Jesus did; namely, to lay down his life for them. He is not to say, "I would lay down my life for him, and so I expect him to be willing to lay down his life for me." No! Regardless of his own interests and life, regardless of what others do or do not for him, he is to be willing to spend and be spent for the blessing of the brethren. He is to have sacrificial love, which goes beyond the Golden Rule, Thus are we to be true disciples.—Z. '15:169.

If we can realize that God has been leading us up to the present time, to bring us to share his glory, and that all things thus far have been working for our good, this is our assurance that all wisdom, power and love shall be exerted on our behalf down to the very end of the racecourse, if we continue to abide in Christ faithfully.—Z. '98:320.

The calamity of sin, imperfection and death has injured the whole world mentally, morally and physically—has made us what the Apostle describes as a "groaning creation." (Romans 8:22.) This knowledge of the facts in the case, possessed by so few, understood by so few, should tend to make these few a peculiar people in their loving sympathy and kindness towards their fellows in distress. Alas, the difficulty is that even these few who know these facts from the Divine Word have selfishness so ingrained in them, and are so oppressed by the cares of this life, that often their sympathies are not all that they should be!—Z. '16:216.

◇

"BE THOU FAITHFUL"

In the case of the Church, if we were faithful until the very last day of our experience and on that day proved unfaithful, it would certainly settle the matter as to our future.—Z. '12:84.

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LOWLINESS of mind, humility, is a mental quality which enables its possessor to look up with appreciation, not only to God, but also to earthly beings, recognizing their good qualities. The Apostle urges that this lowliness of mind should be in all of God's people; this fact proves it to be a quality that demands careful cultivation.

Not all of the Lord's people are lowly in mind. Some of them think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Some of them may be proud of having the Truth or of their ability to serve the Truth. Any such pride is very objectionable in the sight of the Lord, and indicates that its possessor has a very small mind: for, with a proper estimate of matters, the best of us can see that we have nothing of which to be proud, nothing of which to boast. If we have received anything of the Lord, we should boast of our receipts, instead of glorying in something as if we had attained it of ourselves.

So the Lord's people should spend earnest effort to stimulate and encourage humility. Some have this quality naturally; but the larger number have to contend against the reverse tendency—self-esteem, self-exaltation, pride—a feeling that they are superior to others.—Z. '16:35.

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As we look around in the Lord's family, we are bound to see the weaknesses and frailties of its various members. We are not to allow our thoughts to dwell too much upon their undesirable qualities, however, but are to remember all their good ones, especially their loyalty of heart.—Z. '16:35.

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Those who have thus solemnly covenanted to present themselves as living sacrifices together with Christ: that thereby they may be heirs together with him of the spiritual blessings vouchsafed in the Abrahamic covenant, would do well to mark with what faithfulness the heirs of the earthly inheritance paid their vows unto the Most High. Mark also how thoroughly they were tested, and how bravely they stood the tests applied; and from their noble examples let us take courage while we run our race, inspired by the exceeding great and precious promises hidden for us also in that Abrahamic covenant. If Jacob asked no more than the actual necessities for the present life, surely we may be satisfied with nothing more; while we look for a still more glorious inheritance in the promised time of blessing. "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content."—1 Tim. 6:8.

Yet it is to be feared that many who covenant to sacrifice their all in the Lord's service actually render far less than one-tenth. The size of our sacrifice is the measure of our love and zeal in the Lord's service; and time and influence, as well as financial ability, are parts of our possessions to be rendered to the Lord as thank-offerings, while out of that consecrated to him the things needful for our sustenance may be retained in harmony with the spirit of our covenant.—Z. '94:77.

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In harmony with the scriptural statements that we were "shapen in iniquity," that the heart of man is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," every discerning person whose eyes have been opened to recognize depravity can note the evidence of it everywhere, even in young children. Self-will, passionate obstinacy and ill-temper are often to be noted in infants but a few weeks old. And very patient should be the parent as well as very attentive and thorough in the correction of the child, when he remembers that the very traits which need correction have come down to the child from himself. Thus the Christian parent should be not only the most thorough in the matter of training up his child in the way that it should go, but also the most kind, loving and patient in giving this correction and training.—Z. '16:68.

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Time, as well as pruning and fertilizing and cultivating and shower and sunshine, is necessary to the ripe and luscious fruitage that delights the taste. So it is also with the fruitage of plans and purposes, of education and of grace. God's deep designs work out slowly, not only in his great universal government, but also in the hearts and minds of his intelligent creatures. God is operating all things according to his own will along the lines of the fixed principles of his wise and righteous laws—physical, moral and intellectual. To be impatient in any case is foolishly to insist upon having the unripe, hasty, sour, bitter fruitage, which, if the Lord grant it, will prove a sickening penalty for the impatience that demanded it. "Let patience have her perfect work," wait God's time: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Wait the Lord's time and way and the indications of his will in every case, both with regard to ourselves and others and "they that put their trust in him shall never be confounded.—Z. '97:147.

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Those who become weary in well-doing are usually those who have found something attractive in another direction to take their attention away from the things of the Spirit.—Z. '12:344.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY-TWO

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"My Soul, be on Thy Guard!"

DO NOT FORGET THAT OUR EVER ACTIVE ADVERSARY SEEMS TO BE GRANTED ADDITIONAL LIBERTY AND POWER OF TEMPTATION AT THE PASSOVER SEASON. LET EACH SOLDIER OF THE CROSS BE SPECIALLY ON HIS GUARD TO RESIST HIM—STEADFAST IN FAITH AND GOOD WORKS AND LOVE. LET EACH ALSO BE ON GUARD TO HELP AND NOT TO STUMBLE THE "BRETHREN" AT THIS TIME. PRAY FOR ONE-ANOTHER AND FOR US: AS WE ALSO REMEMBER ALL OF YOU AT THE THRONE OF THE HEAVENLY GRACE.—Z. '97:91.

Little Opportunities

"We all might do good where we often do ill:
There is always a way, if we have but the will:
For even a word, kindly breathed or suppressed,
May guard off some pain, or give peace to some breast.

"We all might do good in a thousand small ways;
Forbearing to flatter, yet giving due praise:
In spurning ill rumor, reproving wrong done,
And treating but kindly the heart we have won.

"We all might do good whether lowly or great—
A deed is not judged by the purse or estate;
If only a cup of cold water is giv'n,
Like the mite of the widow 'tis something for heav'n." —Z. '07:150.

GENERAL CONVENTION

General Convention of Standfast Bible Students at I.O.O.F. Hall, Douglas Street, Victoria, B.C., on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 25th, 26th and 27th, 1921. All Standfast Brethren will be welcome. Two meals will be provided daily by the local Ecclesia. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains. For further information please write Brother J. H. Bartlett, P.O. Box 7, Victoria, B.C.

Look the worldly man or woman in the face, and see how the cares and battles of and for sin have left their traces: look then into the faces of those who are **fully** and **intelligently** the Lord's, and notice how the marks of care are superseded by a look of confidence and trust and peace proceeding from the hearty acceptance of their new Master's spirit.—Z. '97:56.

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All who become disciples, and who hope for life in the Kingdom, must expect to sacrifice the present life, and whoever does not sacrifice the present life, shall not find that glorious eternal life which God has in reservation only for the overcomers.—Z. '00:203.

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He who succeeds in avoiding the earning of his daily food by some kind of toil has succeeded in placing himself in an unfavorable condition, for idleness is not only the mother of vice, but the father of discontent. Similarly, there is a ministry of instruction in sickness and trouble which should not be overlooked. The Prophet refers to this blessing that inheres in tribulation, saying, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; and many of the Lord's people can if they will trace some of their greatest blessings and greatest helps in the development of true character to their experiences in various kinds of trouble and disease.—Z. '00:59.

◆

The rest and peace which the Lord gives are not entirely, nor sometimes at all, physical rest and earthly peace. This, he himself declares, saying, "My peace I give unto you, **not as the world giveth."** The peace which our Lord gives is a rest of heart, a trust, a confidence—based not upon things that are seen, which are temporal, transitory, unreliable, but based upon things that are not seen, the eternal things which can be grasped only with the arms of faith and seen only with the eye of faith; but here is rest and here is peace, such as the poor troubled world knows not of, and cannot understand. "Godliness with contentment is great gain."—Z. '98:61.

◆

The lamp of the truth of revelation has guided all the faithful, watchful pilgrims in their journey toward the Celestial City—the Heavenly Kingdom. Oh, what a comfort it has been, and how dreary would have been our pilgrimage without it!

"Looking back, we praise the way
God has led us, day by day!"

Those who have taken heed to the landmarks, pointed out by the Lord through Daniel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and all the holy prophets, realize that we have come already a much longer journey than was expected by the Church when first she started out; but we realize also from these landmarks, that we have approached **very close to the end** of the journey; very near to the time when the great blessing, for which God's people have so long waited and prayed, is at hand.—Z. '02:86.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER FIFTY-TWO

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Two Passover Memorials

Mark 14:12-25.

"As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death till He come."—1 Corinthians 11:26.

THE SUBJECT of today's lesson is one of the most interesting features of Jesus' earthly ministry. He knew that the Apostles did not know that this was to be His last supper with them. Although He had intimated the nearness of His death, His disciples had found it impossible to comprehend that any such disaster could be so near at hand as He had intimated. Jesus, however, with full consciousness of what it meant, was longing for the consummation of His Work. It was probably on the very day at the close of which He and His disciples went to eat the Passover that Jesus said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I in difficulty until it be accomplished!"—a baptism unto death, which was finished the following day.

Peter and John were the two disciples sent to make ready the Passover. Evidently Jesus was at Bethany, at the home of Lazarus, when He sent this word. It is supposed that the large upper room in which the Passover was eaten by Jesus and His disciples was the same one in which the Apostles and others were gathered to await the Pentecostal blessing. . . .

In the evening of the same day, Jesus with the entire Twelve met in this room, all the preparations having been attended to. They met to celebrate the Jewish Passover at its appointed time. The lamb had been roasted, and the unleavened bread prepared, also the bitter herbs. Everything, we may be sure, was exactly in conformity with the original requirement; for Jesus and His Apostles were bound by every feature of the Jewish Law as much as were other Jews—the New Dispensation not yet having been ushered in. Every feature of the Law was binding up to the time of the Pentecostal blessing, which marked the Divine approval of the sacrifice of Jesus and the Divine acceptance of all those who had become His disciples by a full consecration.

Kingdom Honors Desired

So far from realizing that they were on the eve of a great tragedy, the Apostles believed that Jesus would very soon be enthroned as King. They remembered His promise that they should sit with Him in His Throne. This promise seemed so near of realization to them that they could think of little else but the degree of honor which they would have in the Kingdom. They seemed to feel that unless they contended stoutly for it, they would not get so honorable positions. Perceiving their attitude of mind, Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; but ye shall not be so: but he that will be greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

These were new standards, difficult for them to understand; and apparently they are still difficult for the followers of Jesus to comprehend fully. The One who will be chief in the Kingdom will be the One who was the Chief Servant in the flesh. This greatest Servant of all was, of course, the Lord Jesus Himself. But the Master intimates that the same principle holds good in respect to all of His followers. Whoever of them will most faithfully, most earnestly, most zealously, serve the brethren will thereby be increasing his favor with God, and be preparing himself for so much higher station in Messiah's Kingdom.

With the thought that any menial service would signify admission of their unworthiness of a high place, the disciples made no arrangement for feet-washing, none wishing to assume the role of servant. In that sandy country feet-washing was almost a necessity when sandals were worn. By way of rebuke, Jesus arose from the table and performed this menial service for His disciples, telling them the import of the lesson—namely, humility—and intimating that no matter how humble a service they might be able to render to each other, they should be glad to render it.

The lesson is still with us, not as a form or ceremony to be performed, but as an illustration of a principle. Any humble act of service done to one of the Lord's brethren corresponds to this feet-washing.

The Crisis in Judas' Life

The Passover Supper proceeded—the eating of the lamb with the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread, which considerably resembled thick pancakes, and which was sometimes used instead of a spoon to sop up the essence of the meat. One of the Gospels declares that Jesus began to be heavy-hearted, and then said, One of you twelve, eating with Me as My guest, as a member of My family, is plotting My betrayal.

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There may have been a double object in this statement. First, it would show the disciples that Jesus was fully aware of the premeditated betrayal. They would not, therefore, think that something had happened to Him unexpectedly, or out of the Divine Program. Second, our Lord may have meant this as a final reproof to Judas—to startle him, to cause him to think. At very best a traitor's course is dishonorable, but doubly so when the traitor accepts the hospitality of the one against whom he is plotting and eats his bread.

Consternation spread amongst the disciples; and one after another they asked, "Is it I?" The import of this question would be, It is not I whom You have meant! Even Judas joined in the general inquiry, "Is it I?" The Apostle John was seated next to Jesus, and St. Peter beckoned to him that he should ask the Master who was meant. It was probably a whispered inquiry, heard by Jesus only. Our Lord's whispered reply was, "It is the one to whom I will give a sop." Presently, having prepared a special sop, a mark of special interest, He handed it to Judas. Thus St. John and St. Peter knew the affair.

Apparently it was but a short time after this that Judas withdrew, the record being that "Satan entered into him." The spirit of the Evil One got complete control of him while he stopped, and weighed and balanced the matter of selling his best Friend for thirty pieces of silver. It is entirely probable, therefore, that Judas was not present when Jesus, a little later, instituted the Memorial Supper which Christians now celebrate.

The Signification of the Memorial

The Memorial Supper which Jesus instituted is totally separate and distinct from the Passover Supper, and yet they are closely related; for the one was the type and the other its archetype, or higher type, with a still higher signification. In the one a literal lamb was used to typify Jesus, the Lamb of God; in the other, the archetype, the breaking of the bread represented the death of Jesus.

The Jews celebrated the birth of their nation and its deliverance from Egyptian bondage. This had its start in the passing over of their first-born when the tenth plague came upon the Egyptians. St. Paul shows us that the first-borns of Israel, spared in that Passover night, typified the Church of the First-borns, spared, or passed over, in the present time, while the night of sin prevails and before the morning of Messiah's Kingdom is ushered in.

More and more Bible students are reaching the conclusion that the Memorial of Christ's death should not be celebrated monthly or quarterly or weekly; but that it should be considered the archetype of the Jewish Passover, and should properly be celebrated annually, and at about the same time as the Jewish Passover.

We are not to understand that the Apostles comprehended the meaning of Jesus' words when He explained to them the signification of the Supper which He instituted. Rather, as He had already foretold, the Holy Spirit brought these things to their attention and enabled them to comprehend their meaning, after they had received the Pentecostal blessing and enlightenment. Now we may see the import of Jesus' words, "This is My body, broken for you." We perceive that He could not have meant, as some have thought, that the bread was turned into His actual body and the wine into His actual blood. On the contrary, He still had His actual body and His actual blood. He could not, therefore, have meant more than to say, This bread symbolically represents My body, which is to be broken for you; and this wine represents My blood, which is to be shed for you tomorrow—My life given up.

Neither should we think that Jesus meant that special virtue would result to the disciples from the eating of that bread and the drinking of that literal cup. We should properly look far beyond these things, and see that He meant this: Only as you by faith partake of the merits secured by My death can you have the great blessing provided for you as My disciples. The Apostles believed that the death of Jesus was for their sins, and that it constituted the basis of their acceptance with the Heavenly Father. They realized that only as they appropriated the life of Christ would they be truly the recipients of all these blessings.

St. Paul points out for us another important signification of this bread and cup. He declares the oneness of Christ and His Church. He tells us that there is but the one Loaf and the one Cup. Primarily, this Loaf was Christ Jesus; but in a secondary sense all the followers of Christ, after having been justified through His Sacrifice, are privileged to become members of His Body, parts of the one Loaf that is being broken. Likewise, after partaking of the merit of Christ's blood, His sacrifice, all of His true followers are counted as members with Him and as participators in that one Cup.

Hear the Apostle's words: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many are one Bread, and one Body: for we are partakers of that one Bread."—I Corinthians 10:16, 17.

The Sealing of the New Covenant

Jesus spoke of the cup, the fruit of the vine, as representing the blood of the New Covenant. The Law Covenant was the Old Covenant, which failed to bring the blessings to the Jews, because they could not keep it. Hence, also, they were not qualified to bless the other nations of the earth. But God promised a New Covenant, a better one, which would be introduced by a new and higher, or superior, Mediator than Moses. That New Covenant, God declares, will accomplish what the old Law Covenant failed to acomplish; for the new Law Covenant will be inaugurated by Messiah, its Mediator, at His Second Advent. His Kingdom, established in power and great glory, will rule, bless and instruct mankind, and will "take away the stony heart and will give a heart of flesh" to all who will respond to those blessed opportunities.

Jesus' death constituted the blood which seals, or makes efficacious, that New Covenant. But mark further: The Church is not to be blessed under that New Covenant of the Millennial Age, which will be inaugurated at the Second Coming of Jesus, at the establishment of His Kingdom. The Church is to be blessed in advance of that New Covenant. Indeed, their consecrated lives (blood), accepted by our Lord, are counted in as a part of His own sacrifice, which seals the New Covenant. Hence the New Covenant cannot be fully sealed until the entire Body of Christ, which is the Church, shall have shared with Him in the drinking of His Cup—in the sacrifice of earthly rights, privileges, life itself.

The Covenant of Sacrifice

Meantime, we see that Jesus and the Church receive their reward neither under the Law Covenant nor under the New Covenant, but under a special Covenant, called a Covenant of Sacrifice. Reference is made to this Covenant of Christ and the Church in the Psalms, where the Lord is represented as saying, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalm 50:5.) The gathering of those who enter into this special Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord has been in progress for now over eighteen hundred years. We have every reason to believe that the sacrifice is nearly completed, and that soon all the sacrificers, members of the Body of Christ, will be glorified, changed by the power of the First Resurrection and will enter into the joys of their Lord, according to His promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne."

Our Lord indicated that He would no longer drink of the Cup; nor did He. His work, His drinking of the Cup, was finished the next day, on Calvary. There He completed the drinking of the Cup which the Father had poured for Him. The Father has poured the same Cup for all the followers of Jesus; and they must drink of His Cup, as well as partake of the merits of His broken Body, if they would be His joint-heirs in the Kingdom, soon to be established.

This was the import of our Lord's words to St. James and St. John, His disciples, when they asked for special places in the kingdom. Jesus asked, "Are ye able [willing] to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They heartily declared their willingness. Jesus assured them that they should have their request; that if they were willing, He would see to it that they would drink of His Cup. And so it is with all of His followers. The Scriptures assure them, saying, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to His purpose."—Z. '14: 284-286.

The Memorial Supper

HOW sacred the memories which gather around the anniversary of our Lord's death. It calls to mind the Father's love as exhibited in the entire plan of salvation, the center of which was the gift of his Son as our Redeemer. It calls specially to our thoughts him who gave himself a ransom—a corresponding price—for all. Then faith comes still nearer to him who "suffered, the just for the unjust," and with grateful, overflowing hearts and tear-dimmed eyes we whisper, My Savior! My Redeemer! My Lord and Master! "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Ah, yes!—

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend:
Life and joy and peace possessing
From my best and truest Friend."

How blessed the thought that he cares to have us think of him and call him ours—he so great—"far above angels and every title that is named; next to the Father himself;—and we so insignificant, so imperfect, so unworthy of such a friendship. And yet to think that "he is not ashamed to call us Brethren," and that he is pleased to have us memorialize his death and that he gave us the bread to emblemize his broken flesh and the wine to emblemize his shed blood—the one to represent the human rights and privileges purchased for all and of which all may partake, the other to represent the life he gave which secured everlasting life for all who will accept it.

How delightful, too, to count, as he and the Jews did, the days and the hours, even until finally "the hour being come," he sat down with his disciples to celebrate the death of the typical Paschal lamb, and to consider the deliverance of Israel's firstborn from the great destruction which came upon Egypt, and the subsequent deliverance accomplished through those first-born ones for all the typical Israel of God.

How precious to look beyond the type which was commemorated, and to hear the Master, as he took new emblems, say, "**This** [celebrating of the Passover] do [henceforth] in remembrance of me." Ah yes! in the crucified one we can now see "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "Christ our passover [lamb] is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast;" for as oft as we do this, we do show forth our Lord's death until he come again—until, his kingdom having come, we shall be permitted to drink with him the new wine (the new life and joy) in the Kingdom.—Matt 26:29; 1 Cor. 6:7, 8; 11:26.

But we are not only privileged to enjoy the favors of our Lord's sacrifice (by partaking of its merit and its consequent advantages, viz., justification, and restitution rights and privileges as redeemed men), but more than this: we are invited to share with our Master in the **sacrifice** and in its glorious reward. He says to us, Whoever is in sympathy with my work and its results—whoever would share my Kingdom and join in its work of blessing the world, let him also be broken with me, and let him join me in drinking the cup of self-denial, unto death. To all such he says, "Drink ye all of it."

Gladly, dear Lord, we eat (appropriate to our necessities) the merit of thy pure human nature sacrificed for us—for our justification. Gladly, too, we will partake of the cup of suffering with thee, realizing it to be a blessed privilege to suffer with thee, that in due time we may also reign with thee: —to be dead with thee, that in the everlasting future we may live **with** thee and be like thee and share thy love and thy glory as thy Bride. Oh! that we may be faithful, not only in the performance of the symbol, but also of the reality. Blessed Lord, we hear thy word saying, "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup and be baptized with my baptism. Lord, thy grace is sufficient for us, for we are wholly thine, now and forever.

Oh! what a thought: that if faithful in the present privilege of drinking of his cup and being broken with our Lord as his body, we with him will soon be that "Church of the first-born ones whose names are written in heaven," and as such shall constitute the Royal Priesthood, which, under our great High Priest, will lead, out of the Egyptian bondage and slavery to sin, all those slaves of sin whose groanings and prayers for deliverance have entered the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

These will be some of the thoughts which will constrain the Lord's people to meet in little groups, and sometimes quite alone with Jesus, on the evening of March 22nd, next, after six o'clock, to celebrate on its anniversary the most notable event in the history of the Universe of God.

Eat and drink, O beloved, says the King to his spouse. (Sol. Song 5:1.) Let us eat and drink reverently, devotedly, thoughtfully, prayerfully, tearfully perhaps, as we each think of our Redeemer's love and sacrifice, and pledge ourselves afresh to be dead with him. Meet with any who recognize him as their ransom, and who are pleased to **do this in remembrance of him**—or else do it alone.

Let your heart be so full of the reality that forms and ceremonies will generally be forgotten, except such as are needed for decency and order. Prepare beforehand some sort of "fruit of the vine." Our preference is for stewed-raisin juice or unfermented grape juice, and for either Jewish unleavened bread or plain water-crackers, which are about the same in substance—flour, water and salt, without leaven. Leaven being a symbol of sin or corruption, yeast-raised bread is not an appropriate symbol of our Lord, the undefiled and separate from sinners.—Z. '93:83, 84.

The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:1-12.

Golden Text:—"Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

"NEVER man spake like this man." Perhaps the nearest teaching to this Golden Rule was the maxim attributed to Confucius, "Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." This latter is a grand teaching, but it is far inferior to the former, which is sublime. Christians are not to be negative, but positive. They are not merely to follow the standards of others, but to set standards; they are to raise up the Lord's standard before the people. It is not for the followers of Jesus to say, "We will endeavor to keep within the bonds of human law," but rather, "We will live according to the Divine Law, so far as possible. We will esteem that human law represents the standard of the majority of fallen men and not the Divine standard."

Our Savior tells us that we will be tested along the line of our love for God and for our neighbor. God through the merit of Christ's sacrifice has provided forgiveness for our past sins, and now purposes that as his children we shall be taught the lesson of mercy, kindness, forgiveness toward others. Hence he tells us that only in proportion as we exercise benevolence towards others need we expect his benevolence in respect to our weaknesses and shortcomings. The principle of justice is involved in this. Whoever is kind and forgiving towards others demonstrates the possession of love in a ruling, dominating degree. And "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." Hence these may be treated as though they were perfect, because their conduct towards others gives evidence that their hearts are right—ruled by love; and that the imperfections which cause their trespasses are merely weaknesses of the flesh, which may be forgiven, because not of the heart.

From this viewpoint how should Christians judge one another as respects motive, intention, etc.? Surely most leniently! How should they measure one another's endeavors? Surely most generously! How should they look upon the blemish in a brother? Would not their sympathy cause his defects to seem the smaller in their estimation? And would not their own imperfections show the more largely to themselves? Surely such would be more concerned in removing the beam from their own eyes than in assisting the brother to free himself of the mote or lesser blemish troubling him. Hence we may suppose that the continual fault-finder, who sees great blemishes in others and who sees none in himself, is blind to his own defects or hypocritical. This is the Master's word. . . .

All the consecrated followers of Jesus are to be free to come in his name to the Throne of grace to make request for the things which they need—the things promised in the Word of God to the faithful. We are to seek for them and we shall find them. Knocking, we shall have Divine blessings unlocked before us.

Consider how this principle prevails, even amongst fallen humanity. Any father asked for a fish, would he give instead a serpent? If asked for bread, would he give a stone? Surely not! And if so, what shall we say in respect to our Heavenly Father? Would he not be all the more willing to give to his children who ask him? He has indeed given us many blessings without the asking, but some of the chiefest of his favors he withholds from us until we make requests—because thus he would draw us nearer to himself and prepare us the more for the blessings he is willing to bestow.

Elsewhere the Master tells us that the good thing which the Father is specially pleased to bestow is his holy Spirit. This is the all-important thing, for only as we become possessors thereof, only as we attain to the mind, the disposition of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall we be fit for a place in the glorious Millennial Kingdom to which we have been invited. His Holy Spirit is manifested in us by meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness—love.

The Golden Text of our study is (v. 12). "All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the Law and the prophets." The whole demand of the Law of God is briefly summed up in this Golden Rule. **Yet the Christian has an additional requirement**—the Lord's "New Commandment." To attain joint-heirship with the Redeemer in his Kingdom we must "love one another" as our Redeemer loved us—to the degree of self-sacrifice, even unto death. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3:16; Z. '10:73, 74.

A Good Man's Sin

Numbers 20:1-13.

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer."—Psalm 19:14.

ISRAEL'S fortieth year after leaving Egypt was God's appointed time for them to enter the land of Canaan. Moses was in his one hundred and twentieth year, but yet quite vigorous. His sister Miriam had died previously; Aaron, his elder brother, still lived, but died the same year. For thirty-eight years the Children of Israel had resided in the wilderness, making Kadesh-Barnea their camp center, but really occupying a considerable portion of the wilderness with their flocks and herds.

It was in April of the fortieth year that, by Divine command through Moses, they assembled at Kadesh, prepared to enter into the Land of Promise. But the water supply was scant, the people and their cattle were famishing. Murmurings arose, and inquiries if it were not as well to have perished in Egypt or elsewhere as to perish there from thirst.

The burden naturally fell upon Moses, shared, however, by his brother Aaron. All leaders of honor and influence carry weighty responsibilities. Moses and Aaron in turn went to the Lord with the matter, not complainingly, but inquiringly—desiring guidance from on High—from the real Leader of Israel. Nor did they go in vain. The Lord graciously manifested Himself—"The glory of the Lord appeared unto them"—quite possibly also manifest to the people of Israel, who looked on. This glory is surmised to have been a ray of light emanating from the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy.

They were to take the rod, presumably "Aaron's rod that budded," and that was kept in the Ark in the Most Holy. That rod would be a reminder to the people of the Lord's special acceptance of Aaron as the High priest and assistant of Moses. It would be a sign to them of the Divine favor which hitherto had guided their nation, and which still would continue to guide all who would trust in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Smiting the Rock a Sin

The Lord particularly directed that Moses should speak to the rock, and that in response to the word waters would rush forth. On a previous occasion, about thirty-eight years before, in a similar experience near Mt. Sinai, Moses had been instructed to smite the rock; but in this case the rock was not to be smitten. Here Moses and Aaron sinned. "The meekest man in all the earth" forgot himself, and allowed a spirit somewhat akin to pride, self-sufficiency and anger to control him for the moment. Smiting the rock, he cried aloud to the people, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock?"

The water indeed came forth, as the Lord had promised. The people indeed got the blessing needed, but one of the most illustrious men and servants of God there fell under Divine disapprobation. The Lord's decree was that neither Moses nor his brother should enter Canaan. Moses, however, was permitted to go with the people to the end of their journey, and then from Mt. Nebo to see the land across the Jordan.

This condemnation does not signify the Divine reprobation to eternal torment or to any lasting dishonor. Moses got his entire punishment then and there, before death, as do all of God's saintly ones. Whatever stripes, chastisements, punishments, of the future shall be meted out to mankind in general because of wrong doings in the present life, there are none reserved for the saints. The Apostle explains that they are chastened in the present life, that they may not come into condemnation with the world by and by.

They Drank of the Rock—Christ

St. Paul points out to us that the smiting of the rock was symbolical. As the manna, the bread from heaven, represented Jesus, so the smitten rock represented Him also. The refreshing water from the rock symbolized the blessings which flow from Christ's sacrifice. The smiting of the rock at the beginning of Israel's experience was authorized of God. It was necessary that upon Jesus should fall the rod of affliction, even unto death:

(1) "The Lord laid upon Him [the death penalty for] the iniquity of us all":

(2) "By His stripes we are healed."—Isaiah 53:5, 6.

St. Paul's words are, "They did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."—1 Corinthians 10:4.

Just what was symbolized by the second smiting, which God did not authorize, is not explained by St. Paul. The fact that this second smiting was punished tells us that it was wrong, and that it symbolized some improper course on the part of the professed people of God. Two suggestions come to us, either or both of which may be applicable.

(1) This second smiting, at the end of the forty years and just as the people were about to be led into the Promised Land, may symbolize a smiting of the people of God—the Body of Christ which is the Church. A number of Scriptures appertaining to the Gospel Age give the inference that some of the saintly members of the Body of Christ in the end of this Age will be put to shame, or, perhaps, put to death— and thus enter into glory, as did the Master, when He was smitten. In His case the high priest declared that it was expedient that one should suffer, rather than that the entire Jewish people should perish as a nation.—John 11:50.

The religious rulers conspired against the Master—as they supposed, for God's glory. The suggestion has been offered that similarly, in the end of this Gospel Age, religious leaders, moved by similar motives of self-preservation, may conspire for the smiting, the injury, of some of the Lord's followers. If this be a proper interpretation of the type, it indicates that under the Divine providence blessings will flow from the wrong course, yet no greater blessing than might have come by pursuing the right course—of speaking to the rock, asking for the water, the Truth, the refreshment, instead of smiting it.

(2) The other thought, closely related to this one, is that any denial of the Redeemer on the part of His consecrated followers would signify a crucifying afresh, a putting to open shame, a smiting of the rock the second time. St. Paul explains that such a repudiation of the Word of Christ by those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the Heavenly gift and of the powers of the world to come, etc., would mean for them an unworthiness of any place in the Heavenly Kingdom—that they would die the Second Death.—Hebrews 6:4-7.

The fact that both Moses and Aaron participated in the type, and that neither entered the land of Canaan, signifies that the very highest dignitaries and most enlightened members of the Royal Priesthood might be in danger of committing the sin typified, or pictured, in the second and unauthorized smiting of the rock. On the contrary, those who smote the antitypical Rock the first time—those who crucified Christ—the Scriptures assure us did so ignorantly and merely fulfilled the Divine intention. "I wot, brethren, that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers": "for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."—Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8.

Lessons For Spiritual Leaders

If "the meekest man in all the earth," after long years of training and experience, made such a failure, even typically, the lesson to all spiritual leaders should be an impressive one. It says to us in inspired words, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Lord declares (v. 12) that the sin of Moses and Aaron was one of unbelief, "because ye believed Me not—to sanctify Me in the eyes of Israel."

It did require faith in God for Moses to smite the rock. Apparently his lack of faith was in the people. Apparently he wished to produce a dramatic effect—to impress upon them a lasting lesson, "Ye rebels, must I bring you water out of the rock by a blow from this rod?" The effect may have been dramatic. The people may have stood in awe of Moses, but all the same, that was not the best way for dealing with the matter: for it was not God's way. Better would it have been for Moses to have hidden himself—humbled himself—and to have asked water from the rock in Jehovah's name.

Class leaders, Elders, ministers in the Church of Christ, will do well to remember that the blessings which God has arranged shall flow to His people from the smitten Jesus and will come for the asking; and that they are not authorized either to smite the "rock" or to pose dramatically before the people of God as necessary to the supply of the streams of grace and Truth.

On the other hand, the Lord's people, Spiritual Israel, thirsting for grace and Truth now due, are to feel a great deal of sympathy for those who occupy teaching positions. There never was a time surely when the honesty and the faithfulness of the Lord's servants were more severely tested than now. What all need is meekness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love—loyalty to God—faithfulness to their Covenant.—Z. '13:283, 284.

Patient Endurance in Adversity

Genesis 39: 20-23; 40:1-15.

Golden Text:—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10.

THE story of Joseph's trials and difficulties is a most pathetic one: yet we see that in all these things the blessing of the Lord was with him, and he, faithfully responding, his experiences, instead of doing him injury, were on the contrary greatly to his advantage. Although Joseph lived long before the Pentecostal blessing as we experience it—long before the bringing to light of the exceeding great and precious promises of the heavenly nature and Kingdom glories and invitation to the elect to share therein—though Joseph had only the indefinite revelation of God's mercy contained in the great Oath-Bound Covenant given to Abraham, nevertheless his faithfulness and patient endurance constitute a wonderful lesson to the household of the Spirit-begotten sons of God of this Gospel age. If he could endure so patiently and so faithfully, what should not we, so much more highly favored, be able to endure? The secret of his success and ours is the same, namely, a fast hold by faith to the Abrahamic Covenant, which, as the Apostle says, we have as an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is beyond the vail. (Heb. 6:19.) The consideration of this lesson should nerve, energize, every one of the Lord's consecrated people to still further endurance and faithfulness under the circumstances and conditions that the Lord's providence may mark out for them.

Joseph a Slave in Egypt

The Ishmaelitish traders, to whom Joseph's brethren sold him for twenty pieces of silver, took him to Egypt, where he was exposed for sale in the open market, as was the custom of the time. We can well imagine the anguish of the poor boy. Delivered from the pit in which his brethren had put him to die he soon realized that they had not repented at heart, but merely changed the form of their murderous envy. Passing not many miles distant from his father's abode the dejection of the boy of seventeen can be better imagined than described, and arriving in the Egyptian metropolis, the center of civilization at that time, and beholding there wonderful things entirely new to him as a shepherd's son, his heart must have been full of suspense and wonder as to who would purchase him and what would be his future lot in life. There was plenty of room in all of these experiences he had recently passed through for him to lose faith in God—to wonder why he should be left to the mercy of his pitiless brethren, why he should be allowed to become a slave, separated from his father's home. Yet we have no intimation that his faith forsook him.

In the Lord's providence he was purchased by a wealthy official of Egypt named Potiphar. As a servant in this man's house he was faithful to his duties small and great, and grew in his master's confidence and esteem until, at the age of twenty-two, he was made manager of his entire estate. When twenty-seven years of age—ten years after coming to Egypt, in the prime of young manhood, he unwittingly attracted to himself the love of his master's wife, but when it manifested itself he persistently resisted it on the lofty grounds of faithfulness to God and faithfulness to his master. Dr. Blakie pointedly remarks of this

Trial of Joseph's Virtue,

"We may believe that it was no ordinary temptation when, day after day, the mistress of the house, expert in amorous arts, came to spread the net, with every allurement which her skill and her passion could devise. We may conceive how even Joseph might be moved by the thought that, slave as he was, he had attracted the admiration of a woman of such rank, and how the vision might flit before him that through her influence he might recover his liberty and in a bright career realize his dreams after all."

The conduct of Potiphar's wife well illustrates how love may be changed to bitterest hate. In her determination she grasped Joseph by the coat, but he slipped out of it, and then her rage and resentment became bitter. She kept the coat and told her husband that his favorite servant had endeavored to entice her to do evil, and that when she made outcry he fled, leaving his coat in her possession. What a turn this was in Joseph's affairs! Why should the Lord permit him to be thus scandalized, not only in the eyes of his master, but amongst all those with whom he had formed an acquaintance in the ten years of his residence there? Why should the Lord permit his virtue to be so evil spoken of?

This probably seemed to Joseph a mysterious providence, yet in the light of the subsequent story we can see how the Lord's providence had not forsaken him, but was ready to make even this experience work out to his further instruction in righteousness, patience, experience, faithfulness, and to prepare him for still greater blessings by and by—on the throne. The lesson for us of this spirit dispensation is most evident and most striking: as it was not because of Joseph's unfaithfulness that the Lord permitted this trial to come upon him, so it does not speak unfaithfulness on our part and retribution from the Lord if trials and difficulties may be permitted to come upon us. Are we not learning every day more and more to trust the Lord where we cannot trace him in his providences, when we cannot see the end of the way? If we could see the end would it be faith at all? Is it not our lack of knowledge of the future that constitutes the very virtue of faith in the present time?

"Abandon Us Not in Temptation"

The great Spurgeon once remarked, "In contending with certain sins there remains no mode of victory but by flight. The ancient naturalists wrote much of basilisks, whose eyes fascinated their victims and rendered them easy victims; so the moral gaze of wickedness puts us in solemn danger." In harmony with this thought the Apostle wrote to Timothy, "Flee youthful lusts." (2 Tim. 2:22.) Jesus' example in this matter is a wonderful lesson to us all respecting loyalty to the principles of righteousness even to the extent of hazarding the brightest hopes and prospects of an earthly kind. And if we may well copy this lesson of fleeing from temptation, we may also note with the Prophet another lesson in this connection, for when Joseph's master Potiphar was very angry with him, so far as the evidence shows, Joseph contented himself with merely denying the allegation without attempting to demean Potiphar's wife by relating the facts of the case. What a noble example is here given us of avoiding evil speaking, even when that would be the truth!

Joseph's noble heart probably reasoned that while it would have been no more than justice to have revealed the wickedness of the woman, such a course would not only have damaged the wife but have dealt an irreparable blow to Potiphar's affection for her, thus destroying his master's confidence and breaking up his home. Willingness to endure under such conditions is a marvelous illustration of high and noble integrity—character. Such a man was indeed fit for a throne—but not yet: God had other experiences for him before he would be ready for the exaltation intended. So with us: God has called us to the throne of the Millennial Kingdom to be associated with our Lord and Redeemer in his great work: but first we must be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and trials and buffetings and testings of patient endurance are essential to the development of such character as the Lord seeks.

The Strengthening of Character

A lump of rock candy is pure carbon and a diamond is pure carbon, yet there is a difference between them which consists mainly in the fact that the diamond has been crystallized to an extreme degree of hardness, firmness, solidity. So there is a difference between the states and conditions of the New Creatures in Christ. At one time we are mere "babes in Christ," but if faithful through patient endurance and the Lord's instructions and disciplines of providence we are become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might—the "babe in Christ" corresponds then to the pure carbon in the form of rock candy, while the mature Christian, developed in the furnace of affliction, etc., corresponds to the diamond. We remember in this connection the Lord's assurance that at the close of our trial time in the end of the Gospel age, at his second coming, he will make up his "jewels."

At that time undoubtedly an official of Potiphar's rank would have been permitted to kill his slave under such a charge, and the fact that, instead, Joseph was imprisoned, may therefore be taken as an intimation that Potiphar was not fully convinced of the treachery of the man who had served him faithfully for ten years. But a prison in olden times differed greatly from a modern prison in civilized lands. Joseph, in mentioniing the prison, "dungeon" (v. 15) in the Hebrew calls it a "hole," and a minister familiar with oriental prisons of today says:—

"We have visited many a prison in the Levant; we have seen . . . intolerable filth and want of ventilation, the excess of vermin, the unmerciful stocks in which the feet are made fast. We may well pity virtuous Joseph, who was indeed, as claimed by tradition, put into the prison dungeon of the present city of Cairo, which is composed of dark, loathsome and pestilential passages where the prisoners are chained to the wall."

Joseph's experiences in prison are referred to by the Psalmist (Psa. 105:18), saying, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in irons."

What was the effect of this new experience upon Joseph? Was he discouraged, cast down, embittered in soul? Did he say to himself or to others, If this be the reward of virtue, give me vice? Did he repine against the Lord's providences in permitting this experience, or was he patiently submissive, trustful? Joseph was in all these experiences the most wonderful, model example of the proper course of a true Christian and saint. And again we suggest that if he could be faithful with as little light as he enjoyed respecting the Lord's permission of this evil, what might not the Lord reasonably expect of us who have been blest with so much greater light and instruction, and with the noble example of Joseph and scores of others in the Scriptures and in our own experiences—what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness and faith in God?

For very shame's sake we should strive at least to come up to the standard of Joseph—we who have the exceeding great and precious promises—we who have the explanation of why our trials and difficulties are permitted and how they are to prepare us for the Kingdom and its glorious work. Can we not readily see how Joseph's trials and difficulties developed character in him? and how, as he overcame in one instance after another, he was becoming stronger—his character was crystallizing? Ah! no wonder he will be amongst the "ancient worthies" who, in the future, after the glorification of the Church, will be made princes in all the earth for the ruling and blessing and uplifting of the entire human family, under the guidance and direction of the Christ, Head and body. Most evidently the Lord knows how, not only to select the wonderful characters for his service, but also to develop these characters and prove and test them, and make them strong for his service and their blessing.

"The Lord Was With Him"

Joseph's experience in the stocks was a limited one. Evidently the prison-keeper discerned that he had a prisoner of no ordinary character and ability, whatever might be charged against him. His reverence for the Lord and his faithfulness to duty made him a marked man, and the keeper of the prison was glad to give over one responsibility after another into Joseph's hands. According to the story, Joseph's own experiences made him tender hearted toward the other prisoners, whose degradations and sorrows he was enabled to enter into by reason of his own experiences. He was learning noble lessons, which would fit and prepare him for higher usefulness as the governor of Egypt. The secret of the whole matter is told in the lesson in a few words, "The Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made to prosper."

Whoever has reverence for the Lord in any degree will be proportionately blessed: much faith, much reverence, much obedience will surely lead to much blessing in heart and life—to much supporting and steadying of character, whatever it may have been by nature—to much of the spirit of a sound mind, however erratic the person may have been naturally to begin with. In all these respects we who have the instructions of the Lord's Word or the encouragement of his promises and the guidance of the spirit of a sound mind are greatly blessed. In proportion as we make use of them and develop the proper character we shall have the ultimate reward and hear the Master's voice, saying, It is enough, come up higher. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

We should never forget, as "New Creatures in Christ Jesus," the exhortation of the Golden Text to faithfulness—to the Lord (which includes faithfulness to the brethren, to the truth, to righteousness in every sense of the word). This faithfulness must be tried, tested, proven, clear down to the end of life's journey—until we go into the prison-house of death. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." The Lord whom we serve is able and willing to open the prison-doors and bring us forth in the First Resurrection to a share in the glory, honor and immortality of his own Kingdom. Hallelujah, what a Savior! what a salvation! and for what a peculiar people these are intended! . . .

Prospering in Prison

Well might the chief jailor be content to leave the care of the prison in Joseph's hands. We may well imagine the cleaning up of the dungeon effected under his direction, and that a measure of peace would reign within those dark walls quite in contrast with the bedlam that had previously prevailed. Wisdom, mercy, gentleness, patience, were all, we may be sure, needed and exercised; and the model prison not only effected a blessing upon those who were incarcerated, but brought a blessing also to Joseph in his own heart-development, and additionally in that our own joy and peace are always ministered to when we endeavor to solace the woes of others.

A picture of how Joseph dealt with the prisoners is given in the lesson: instead of treating them rudely and roughly, he looked after their interests to such an extent that he noticed one morning that two of the prisoners were of peculiarly sad countenance, and he tenderly inquired, "Wherefore look ye so sadly today?" They had dreamed, and they were in trouble lest their dreams boded further adversity. Joseph said unto them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you." How evidently the secret of Joseph's faithfulness and strength of character lay in the fact that he had faith in God—that he believed in the great Oath-Bound Covenant that God had made with his great-grandfather Abraham, confirmed to his grandfather Isaac, and again to his father Jacob, and of which he was an heir. What a power faith has in life to hold it steady in every storm and cloudy trouble!

One of the dreams bore a most favorable interpretation, and Joseph requested the one who would so shortly be set at liberty and restored to the king's favor that he would remember him and his kind attentions to him while in the prison, and speak a good word to the king on his behalf, that he might be relieved from the dungeon. And in explaining the matter let us not overlook the fact that he neither incriminated his brethren nor Potiphar's wife, but merely said as an excuse for his being in prison, "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." It was not necessary that he should speak evil of any in order to plead his cause, and he abstained. What an evidence we here have that our race 3,000 years ago were neither monkeys nor savages. On the contrary, this natural man, not begotten of the holy Spirit (which did not come upon any until the Gospel dispensation—Pentecost), had such a marvelous development of generosity, love, that he seems not even to have been severely tempted along the lines of evil speaking—and that without any instruction, either oral or written.

How this story should shame many who have named the name of Christ and have professed to turn their backs upon sin and every evil work and who well know that evil speaking is closely related to the works of the flesh and of the devil. Joseph had not the instructions of our Lord and the apostles to the effect that love is the principal thing, that love thinketh no evil, suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked, etc.; and that this love is not only appropriate amongst the Lord's people, who should love one another as he has loved us, but must be extended also to our neighbors, that we may love our neighbors as ourselves—yea, beyond this, to our enemies, who are to be fed and clothed by us if they need our assistance. Thank God for the lesson of Joseph—enduring affliction, yet full of faith, mercy, gentleness, patience, kindness. How evidently the mind had to do with all this character-development. Without the hopes set before him in the Abrahamic promise, Joseph might have been as dispirited and characterless as the majority of mankind. Remember, too, that it is the same promise that we are heirs to, as the Apostle declares—Christ is the heir, and if we be Christ's then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.—Gal. 3:16, 29.

"Virtue may be assailed but never hurt;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory."

—Z. '07:108-110.

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"Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds." The children of God should be joyful at all times—**even in tribulation,** knowing that these experiences work out for us a development of character and a preparation for the Kingdom glories. The Psalmist here foretells that the saints at this time are at rest upon their beds, while they sing God's praise. This statement might be meaningless to us until we understand from other scriptures that these beds represent creeds or the sum total of one's religious belief.—Z. '15: 346.

Pastoral Advice on Prayer and Testimony

THE New Creation needs a special meeting of a devotional kind once a week for prayer and testimony. We believe that the friends would find it very profitable to set aside at least one night in the quarter as a prayer meeting in a very general sense. Our suggestion has been that the middle Wednesday evening of the quarter be the one selected for this purpose. This meeting should be devoted to prayer rather than to testimony. It may be opened with a prayer by the leader, who could then call for two or three prayers. Afterward he might read the text for the week, and comment upon it for about three minutes; or if the Class were very small, comment about **five** minutes; if very large in numbers, about **two** minutes. The length of the Comment would be according to the size of the Class.

Then the leader might say, This is the evening we have arranged to be especially for a prayer service. We have all found, no doubt, that it is a special privilege for the Christian to worship the Lord, to offer prayer, praise. With the heart, we **believe**; with the mouth, we confess. During this service we prefer not to call by name, but desire that all present participate. If you have only a few words, no matter. Indeed, we would rather encourage the thought that the prayer should not be too long. Now we will give opportunity for three to rise—two brothers and one sister; after that we will have a hymn; following the hymn we will have another opportunity for prayer—one brother and one sister (according to the general make-up of the class), and thus give an opportunity all around.

We find that a great blessing comes to the Lord's people from the exercise of the privilege of prayer. They need to be encouraged, for many of them have not had such encouragement in their earlier life experiences.

We think that once a quarter for the special prayer service would serve the purpose better than once a month. More than once a quarter might prove tedious; and if such order has been followed in any Class, we recommend that it be changed.

A Model Testimony Meeting

As a rule the mid-week meeting should be set aside for praise and testimony. As before stated, the Christian needs a special devotional meeting, with opportunities for relating his experiences. Up-to-date testimonies are very helpful. All the Lord's people have trials and difficulties, and by hearing of one another's experiences, we learn to sympathize with each other.

Such meetings should begin with a hymn or two, followed by one or more short prayers. The brother who is to open the meeting with prayer, should be instructed before the meeting what to do and what not to do. And the opening prayer should be merely a request for Divine blessing upon the hearts and the minds of those assembled, that they might be in the right condition to receive the Lord's blessing.

Suppose that the text for the evening read, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." The leader would say something like this: Our text for the week reads thus (here read the text). . . . Apparently, in God's sight the quality of humility is one of the most important qualities for any one of His people to possess. The entire Scriptures seem to indicate that when we have humility we are pleasing in God's sight; and that unless we have this quality we could never be fit for the Kingdom. We can see the wisdom of this requirement, too; for if God should exalt to a high position those who are not humble, it might lead to further difficulty in Heaven.

We can see that Satan was not properly submissive to God. After he had gotten into this proud condition he probably thought that he could do better than God; and in his endeavor to show what he could do, he brought his own downfall and brought the human family into sin and death. No wonder, then, that God required Jesus to show that he had submitted Himself to the Father's will. We see the course of Jesus in this matter, and how the Father afterwards exalted Him. It is for us to submit ourselves to everything which God's providence brings to us. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Now, dear friends, perhaps you may have something to tell us of your experiences this week, along the line of humility, or its opposite—pride. This is not to be a dissertation on Scripture. We already know what the text means. We want you to tell us of your own personal experiences. What experiences have you had that have tended to impress this Scripture on your mind? Let us have some little page from your personal experience. We will begin with Brother A, and then have Sister B, and then will alternate between the two sides of the room, and thus progress. Will you give us your testimony, Brother? . . .

In a testimony meeting, where there are sixty to one hundred present in the Class, there is not the best opportunity for the most helpful meeting. The most profitable number would seem to be twelve to fifteen. Then there is sufficient variety, and none too much time to spare, yet enough time for all to testify.

If the first who testifies has a wrong thought or course of action, he may say: This week I had a conversation with a preacher who thinks that he knows a great deal about Scripture—I asked him several questions, which he could not answer; and all the people could see that he could not answer at all!

The leader might say to him, Brother, I have no doubt that you meant that well, but I am not so sure that you did it wisely. It might have been better if you had done it gently. We are not to be rude, but gentle, in meekness instructing those who oppose. You must remember that it would be a very difficult matter for a man of years, of standing, of education and reputation to see these things. You should, therefore, be doubly on guard not to arouse antagonism. So I would advise that in a case like that, we would simply drop a little word, and this word would be more in harmony with the suggestions of gentleness, meekness. In speaking as you did, that minister might have thought that you were not humble enough.

There might be another one who would have the thought all twisted in another way. The art of testifying well is one that the leaders of testimony meetings should cultivate in the class. They should have right ideas about these matters, so that the Class would get proper thoughts as to how to deal with what comes up. In this way they have something fixed in their minds.

Testimony Meeting Not For a Discourse

If one attempts to give a sermon, the leader might say, Excuse me, Brother, but this is not a meeting for a discourse. This is a testimony meetnig. Perhaps at some other time you can speak more at length.

It might be well for the leader to give in advance a definition of what a testimony is, something as follows: Presumably we all know what a testimony is. It is not a discourse or a dissertation on Scripture. This is a meeting especially for testimonies. I will give a dissertation myself on the text for the evening, now, at the beginning; but later we will wish to have the personal experiences of the friends.

We take it for granted that all the friends mean well; anything that is not just in order is not seen by them to be out of order. But by the leader's remarking that he would read the text and give a few words regarding its signification, and would then hear testimonies, they will see what is expected. By the leader's giving his own personal testimony at the close of the meeting, they will also get the proper thought.

Our thought is that it would not be best for the friends to depart for their homes with any unseemly haste, but to tarry for a word of greeting. That is our custom. We do not know any Scripture bearing directly upon this subject, and we would have no right to lay down a rule or law; we merely give the suggestion that nothing would be gained by entering into too much conversation at the close of the service. There is a danger of the after-meeting crowding out the benefits and blessings of the service. Of course, if they leave promptly the friends have not so much opportunity for fellowship, unless they come a little earlier—a little ahead of time—to the place of meeting. If some can do this it would not be amiss for them to have a little friendly interchange before the coming of the leader, and before the hour for meeting. This would seem to be a very profitable opportunity.

Proper Attitude in Prayer

Nothing in the Scriptures limits the Christian as to the attitude of his body when he goes to the Lord in prayer. Standing and kneeling are both mentioned. One would have to be guided by the spirit of a sound mind. If he were out on the street, it would surely be undesirable to kneel. If he were on a stone floor, it might also be undesirable to kneel. If he were in private, it would seem best to kneel in prayer. Some have told us, however, that when they get upon their knees they are likely to get very sleepy. We would wish to be in that attitude which would enable us best to think of what we are doing. If we found that on our knees we were apt to grow sleepy, we would assume some other attitude which would keep us awake and attentive to prayer.

As for congregational prayer, it is our thought that it can generally be best observed sitting, with the head bowed. Of course, the preference of attitude is largely a matter of education, of habit. It has been our thought to say to the friends everywhere, that in public service this attitude would best be observed during prayer. Where the gathering is small and there is a carpet on the floor, it might be as well to kneel.

As for testimony meetings, it is our opinion that unless the class be a large one, it is better that they sit when testifying; for by remaining seated the giving of a testimony is easier. A difficulty with some in giving a testimony is that they rise and, becoming embarrassed, forget what they are going to say. So it reduces the nervous excitement of some to remain sitting. In a large meeting, it would be better for the person to stand, so that the voice can reach all.

Standing During Congregational Singing

In the matter of singing, we believe that the custom of standing, which prevails in Great Britain, is a very good one. It would seem to be too much to stand during a praise service, where a number of songs follow each other. But standing in singing has its advantages generally. A person in standing is putting himself in a distinctive attitude; and he can sing better because of thus putting his vocal chords in better position. It is desirable, therefore, when a hymn is announced, that the friends stand.

The invitation to rise should always be given in an appropriate way and not in a peremptory manner. The leader should not say, The congregation will rise, but, Let us rise and sing. There might be some who are in such physical condition that they would better remain sitting; hence the invitation, Let us rise and sing, is particularly intended for those who wish to rise. We think it would be a great mistake to say, Let us rise and sing, and then add—as some do—Let us remain standing while Brother A offers prayer. This might in many cases be imposing a real hardship.

To Much Self-Conceit

But in the closing hymn, if the audience rise, then instead of having them sit down for the closing prayer, it would be well to remain standing, and the prayer should be merely in the form of a benediction, which should not be distressing in length to anybody. If there had been one prayer before, there would not be further necessity for more than could be offered in a few words. Most prayers are too long.

One who is leading in prayer should not interfere with the liberties and rights of the entire congregation by the length of his petitions. We do not read that our Lord made very long prayers. It is true that He sometimes continued all night in prayer, alone; but He offered no lengthy prayers in public. The "Lord's Prayer" is quite brief and to the point. Those people who think they should tell the Lord all about how He should run the Universe, have too much self-concern, too much self-conceit. When we learn how poorly we are able to run ourselves, it should make us very slow to advise the Almighty as to how to manage His affairs.

Formal Prayer Often Mockery

A Boston newspaper, in referring to a prayer offered by a prominent minister, stated the next day that Rev. —— delivered the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience! The Editor evidently knew that the prayer was not addressed to the Lord! We need to have much of the spirit of a sound mind. We presume the Lord sees that all our intentions are good. But He has not told us that we are to pray to be heard of men. We are to pray to the Lord.

In private prayer we are told to "enter into thy closet," and we suppose that no one should pray in a tone that could be heard outside the door. Prayer, either in private or in public, is to be addressed to the Almighty, in reverent terms, and should express the desire of the heart appropriate to the occasion. We should know for what we are going to the Lord. It would be better that we should not go to the Throne of Grace unless we have something that we wish to say.

At the close of any meeting we think it would be very unwise for the speaker to pray for ten or fifteen minutes, or even **five** minutes. Two or three minutes would be an abundance, we think. The Lord knows about all our needs, and we should have consideration for the congregation.

It is something of a matter to sit for an hour, and then to prolong the service by a lengthy prayer is unwise. Lengthy prayers should be offered in private. Some Christians, however, need to be encouraged along the line of prayer—some are not disposed to pray as much as they should. Prayer is a most wonderful privilege, but one that should not be abused by endless repetition of the same thoughts.—Z. '14: 20-22.

"Not Ignorant of His Devices"

TO BE perfectly balanced physically is to be almost immune to disease. In other words, those who digest well what they eat, and who eat sufficiently and who work proportionately are so healthy that colds and other ailments pass them by. Those attacked by every passing ailment are usually either the **under-nourished** or the **slothful**. (See Vol. VI., pp. 559-562.)

This is true also of the New Creation. Some are always "catching" something in the way of false doctrine—usually because **under-nourished** in the Truth, but sometimes because their **labors for the Truth** have been insufficient to properly utilize the nourishment they have taken.

Whoever has studied the Word to good effect has learned that its standard is the correct one; namely, that we must grow in knowledge and the graces of the Spirit by our daily walk in life. We put forth first the **faith** foot and then the **works** foot, and thus proceed to more faith and more works. These "rightly exercised" make us strong in the Lord and the power of his might. It is to such obedient children of God that the promise applies, "The wicked one toucheth him not." Surely this is the only safe condition for any of the Lord's people to occupy.

The Lord has provided for his household the long-promised "meat in due season"—"things new and old." Some have repudiated and violently opposed these blessings; others of us have embraced them and feasted on them and hungered and thirsted for more and more of the same kind, declaring with the poet:—

"I love to tell the story,
  Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings
  As nothing else would do."

We want more of the same, but since tasting of the heavenly manna we have no appetite for other things. If the class thus described is rightly exercised by their good nourishment . . . they will neither be slothful nor be busy making a new brand of their own. They prefer to use . . . the very kind and brand which the Lord has provided. These, thankful and active, are in no danger from all the various snares and poisons prepared by the great Adversary—and permitted by God as tests to his people. As the Apostle Peter declares: "If ye do these things ye shall **never fall**."

But there are others who are **sure to fall away** in this evil day, as the Scriptures declare:

(1) Those who received the Truth with joy—those glad to learn that there is not a hell of torment, but a blessing provided by the Lord for all the families of the earth. These, without the proper loving zeal, are indolent as respects labors of love and self-denial on behalf of the Lord, the Truth and the brethren: the Truth they have rather inclines to puff them up and makes them fit subjects for any malaria of error which the Adversary may blow their way. The more knowledge of the Truth such have had and have not properly used to the glory of God the more sure they are to "catch" some error; and the severer and more hopeless will be their case. Is this not both true and **just**? Does it not speak loudly to all of us to **strive**, to **labor**, to **sacrifice**, if we would be accepted as "overcomers"?

Nor is it enough merely to "beat the air"; we must, as the Apostle declares, "strive lawfully if we would be crowned." (2 Tim. 2:5.) And lawfully means: in harmony with our Lord, and the arrangements he has provided. It is noticeable that the "slothful servants," when entrapped by the Adversary, seem to become very energetic for the error.

With sorrow we say it: we know of some who have long been favored of God with a knowledge of the Truth, who seem less clear in it than they were ten or twenty years ago, and who show less fruitage than they then did. . . . Would that we could arouse such. But if they are deaf to the Lord's words how little may we hope that ours would influence them.

(2) The under-nourished spiritually are liable to "catch" errors, or rather to be caught by them, at any time. We may well suppose that, "as new born babes," they have the Lord's special care for a time, that they may grow strong in the Lord. But we must also expect that such as refuse and neglect the various provisions and exhortations of the Master for their development, will not be counted worthy of a share in the Kingdom, and will therefore be permitted to stumble and fall "with the hypocrites," though they are not hypocrites and eventually will have a different portion. First one thing and then another will be permitted of the Lord to prove and test and sift his true people; whom he will thus refine and purify for himself, for his companionship in the coming glory.—Z. '08:39, 40.

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We who are looking forward to the close of our earthly journey, and that before very long, should see to it that our lives are spent day by day in such a manner that some will be the happier for them; and that our decease will be recognized by some, at least, as a loss.—Z. '02:106.

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God's people should beware of pride as they would avoid the most deadly plague.—Z. '98:86.

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The true Christian is not "heady" on the contrary, his consecration to the Lord figuratively decapitated him; he lost his head, renounced his own will and self rule, and submitted himself, as a **member of the body** of Christ, to the absolute control of Jesus, the Head of the Church. (Eph. 1:22, 23.) Such, so long as they abide as members of the true body of Christ, cannot be heady, cannot be self-willed. It is this very self-will that first of all they reckon dead, in order that they might have the mind or will of Christ. To revive the self-will would be to lose the mind of Christ. The true Christian therefore, in every affair of life,—in respect to its pleasures as well as in respect to its burdens and trials,—appeals to his Head for direction, to know how and what to do or say—yea, to have even the very thoughts of his mind in full conformity to the will of God in Christ.—Z. '99:102.

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We may not always know who are the Lord's, but we may always know that "the Lord knoweth them that are his"—the heart-faithful. And we may be sure that these shall not stumble, though they be permitted to pass through trials and difficulties which would deceive and stumble, if it were possible, the very elect. To these the Lord will, with every temptation, present also a way of escape; he will succor them because they are his. As the Apostle Peter says, "If ye do these things (fulfill the royal law of love and devotion to God and the neighbor) **ye shall never fall**; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:10, 11; Z. '99:154.

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Outside of all other evidences, the true Christian has in his own personal experiences abundant proof of our Father's love and care. The Master said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall upon the ground without your Father . . . but ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. 10:29.) As he progresses in the narrow way the child of God comes to learn the fullness of meaning in these words of our Lord.—Z. '15:198, 199.

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The Truth is God's representative, Christ's representative, and hence our standard, and as true soldiers we must defend our standard even unto death.—Z. '03:423.

◆

It is proper to take every precaution to keep the lines of communication with our Heavenly Father well open. For instance, in private prayer, if there is a tendency toward drowsiness or toward thoughts going to other things, then we might lift the head, if it be bowed; or if the eyes be closed, we might open the eyes, and raise them. We are to see to it that in all our prayers and supplications these are in the spirit, that they are not perfunctory, not formalisms. We are to see to it that they are the real expressions of our heart. We may say that a few sentences of real heart-prayer will accomplish more good for the child of the Lord than any amount of lip service. We advise that any who have difficulty in keeping the mind concentrated while in prayer should rather intensify, and shorten their petitions and that in all their prayers they should see that the things they desire and pray for are in harmony with the Lord's word—in the interest of the New Creature.—Z. '15:245.

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The members of the Body of Christ are all to be copies of God's dear Son. This does not mean that God's dear people will be able always to control their looks and actions and words, but that the heart must recognize this standard and strive to attain to it. Every time a person who has some weakness along the line of pride or vanity will apologize for a wrong done he will by that act show both God and man that his **heart** recognizes the right principle. A great blessing will come to him because of his following very strictly the Divine Word; thus he will gradually overcome his weakness and strengthen his character.—Z. '12:339.

Each disciple is to seek to know truthfully just what talents of natural ability and opportunity the Master has committed to his care, and to seek to use every one of these as fully, as thoroughly and **as constantly as possible**, so that the results may be much fruit, much praise, much service, much honor to the Lord.—Z. '01:59.

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"Who shall be able to stand?" Only those who have availed themselves of the mercy of God, and who have come into covenant relationship with **him**;—and they only as they **maintain** the spirit of their consecration, and grow in grace, knowledge and love toward God and men.—Z. '01:206.

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Let the Lord's people give thanks continually, and let the thankfulness of heart extend and manifest itself in words and conduct, in all that we do and say, that all may be to the praise of his glory who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light!—Z. '01:220.

◆

The characteristics of God's dear Son **must** be found in all those who will be eventually accepted as his Bride and joint-heir.—Z. '01:263.

◆

Our Lord assures us that if the **main thought** of our hearts is his service and the promotion of righteousness and an attainment of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love him, then we need carry no anxious cares respecting the future. As his disciples we will have trials and tribulations enough day by day, and will need daily to lean upon the Bridegroom's arm as we seek to walk the narrow way. Sufficient for each day will be the evil of itself; and thanks be to God also, we have the promise that daily his grace shall be sufficient for us.—Z. '98:44.

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Each day will bring to the consecrated opportunities for giving something to the Lord, either directly, or indirectly to his people or others in his name. **Each day** will bring opportunities for **giving up** something precious to the selfish, carnal nature.—Z. '94:157.

◆

The Christian may be considered in some respects a dual being: he not only has his natural body, depraved by inherited sins and weaknesses, and his natural mind also depraved, and in sympathy with the weaknesses of the flesh, but he has also his renewed mind or will, which desires to serve the law of God. These two minds or wills are contrary: they cannot be harmonized; and the man who endeavors to recognize both, and to make the two joint-rulers of his mortal body, is the "Double-minded man," "unstable in all his ways," described by the Apostle James (1:8). The "lukewarm," neither cold nor hot, neither for sin nor against sin, are failures in every sense of the word. (Rev. 3:16.) God wants positive characters, and others will not be approved or accepted.

In every case, then, the new mind must be in control, and the depraved, fleshly mind must be subjected to it for destruction. But here comes the difficulty. The natural mind ("heart") is deceitful above all things, and desperate as well as wicked (Jer. 17:9), and the various members of our bodies in their depravity sympathize with the natural mind and, favor it; so that when the new mind battles with the old mind and pursues it to destroy it, the latter feigns to be dead, and hides quietly for a time, only to come forth more craftily later.—Z. '96:121.

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The Lord gives special blessing to those who are especially his, and we also may properly give more of our love and favor to those who are in accord with us.—Z. '06:78.

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A little while,—a very little while—and the world will witness an exemplification of its God-ignoring theory, when anarchy will prevail and anarchists will claim that they are the "fittest" type of the human family. Ah! that will be a rude shock to these philosophers and their dreams. Thank God for his word instructing us that he has so timed matters that at that very juncture the "elect" will be glorified and take the control of earth's affairs—at the very point where otherwise selfishness would so run riot that "no flesh would be saved."—Z. '05:72.

◆

"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF HIM"

The Prophet, speaking evidently of the living members of the body of Christ at the close of this dispensation, declares, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" There is a beauty, a grace, peculiar to our Lord, the Head; and each member of his body has some peculiar grace or quality of character-likeness to him. . . .

It is not our privilege or opportunity to anoint the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus. Simon and others of that time had that great privilege, however they used it. With us, however, the privilege still remains of anointing the feet members of the body of Christ, and **day by day we are tested along this very line.** To what extent do we love much the Lord and his Members? Is it not in proportion to our appreciation of the divine love for us and for all mankind? If we love little we will honor little, if we love much we will honor much.

Let us, then, avail ourselves of the privileges day by day of anointing the feet members of the body, realizing that whatsoever is done unto one of the least of these his brethren is done unto the Lord, himself, and is a perfume of sweet odor to him. Let us be more gentle, more tender, more careful in our honoring and dealing with the feet members. Let us remember that they have trials and difficulties enough in their conflict with the tiresome journey of life, and that there must be no neglect of them on our part, **for the opportunity of thus manifesting our love and devotion to the Lord is too great a privilege to be overlooked or slighted.** Nor need we wait for opportunities to do great things; kind words and looks, a little assistance, may be the tears or the perfume as circumstances may permit.—Z. '06:123.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY-THREE

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Our Accounts With the Lord

ALL Christians should keep their accounts squared with the Lord. If they come short, they should lose no time in getting the account squared, in obtaining forgiveness through the merit of the Savior's sacrifice. Such accounts with the Lord should be settled promptly at the time of their occurrence, or not later than the day of their occurrence. They should not be allowed to accumulate: for they will rise as a wall between the soul and the Heavenly Father. But whatever has been the condition in the past, the Memorial season, above all others, is the time for making sure that no cloud remains between the Lord and us, to hide us from His eyes.

Thus forgiven, thus cleansed of any defiling spot on our robe of Christ's righteousness, let us keep the feast—the Memorial of our Lord's death. In it let us afresh acknowledge and impress upon our minds the importance of the merit of His sacrifice and death, and how it represents the grace of God to us, as it will by and by represent the same grace extending through the Millennial Kingdom to the whole world. Let us remember also our devotion of ourselves, our consecration to be dead with our Lord, to be broken as members of His Body, parts of the One Loaf, and to participate in the drinking of His Cup of suffering and shame and death. "For if we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him."—2 Timothy 2:12.

We trust that the celebration of the Memorial this year may be a very deeply impressive one, an occasion of rich blessing to all of the Lord's consecrated people everywhere. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast."—1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

We trust that each little class, or group, celebrating the Memorial together will appoint one of their number a secretary to write, stating briefly the interesting facts connected with the celebration, the number present, and the number participating, so far as can reasonably be estimated.—Z. '14:84.

"The Earnest of Our Inheritance"

IN our Memorial service let not our hearts merely meditate upon the sufferings of Jesus, nor merely upon the sufferings of the members of his Body as they walk in his footsteps to sacrificial death. On the contrary, let us receive a proper exhilaration of spirit from our participation in this cup. We read that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and the Apostle urges all these who are drinking of the cup, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord: and again I say, Rejoice!" The Christian's life is not a sad or morose one, but a most joyful one. He can even be joyful in tribulation, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Knowing also that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"—beyond the veil. (Rom. 5:3, 4; 2 Cor. 4:17.) We thus partake in the cup of suffering and joy which is an earnest of our inheritance, which we will receive at the Second Coming of our Lord and our gathering together with him—as his members and his Bride class. This rejoicing in spirit is necessary to our courage and zeal in the service of the Lord. Note the operation of it in St. Paul, who, with Silas, could sing praises to God in the prison with his feet in the stocks and his back lacerated. And so it should be with all Christ's true followers in the narrow way. With the wound of every thorn, with the pain of every sharp arrow of bitter words with which we are assaulted for Christ's sake, we may have joy unspeakable.—Z. '10:117.

All Spiritual Israelites who are in the right heart attitude toward the Lord are filled with songs of gratitude and praise—not always audibly, however: for many can best sing and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Indeed, the Psalm of Life, which each of the Lord's followers declares in acts and words to those about him, is the best testimony, the best praise we can raise—more to the glory of our King than any other can be.—Z. '17:298.

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Let those who appreciate their privileges in Christ take heed lest they also in some unguarded moment sell their privileges for the paltry recompenses of this present life.—Z. '94:64.

GENERAL CONVENTION

General Convention of Standfast Bible Students at I.O.O.F. Hall, Douglas Street, Victoria, B.C., on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 25th, 26th and 27th, 1921. All Standfast Brethren will be welcome. Two meals will be provided daily by the local Ecclesia. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains. For further information please write Brother J. H. Bartlett, P.O. Box 7, Victoria, B.C.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER FIFTY-THREE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Christ, Our Passover

In the dark night, when Egypt lay asleep,
Forth went the angel, God's command to keep:
Slay all the first-born, even from the throne,
Down through the realm to the humblest home.

Swift was his work; and on the midnight air,
Oh, what a cry of anguish, and despair
Rose, from the hearts of those in every home:
God's word was sure; the last great plague had come.

But in the homes of Israel, what a sight!
Darkness without, in every dwelling, light.
Clad for a journey; shoes upon their feet;
With staff in hand, a solemn feast they eat.

Their father's God had heard their cries at last:
His time had come; their bondage now was past;
So in that night while Egypt mourned her dead,
They ate the lamb with bitter herbs and bread.

But why this blood we see on every door?
Why does the angel, seeing, pass it o'er?
Israel's first-born in Egypt's danger shared;
And only through that blood could they be spared.

Centuries passed; and still by God's command,
Each year they slew, and ate the paschal lamb.
Not that its blood could for their sins atone,
But as a type of one that yet should come.

* * *

That sinless one, who, hanging on a tree,
Bore all earth's sins, to set the prisoners free;
That Righteous One, that perfect Lamb of God,
Who for the world gave his most precious blood.

Our blessed Lord, with those whom he loved best,
On that last night, sat down to keep the feast.
"With great desire," he told his chosen few,
"Have I desired to eat this feast with you."

"My heart is grieved; for I betrayed shall be
By one of you, my chosen company."
"Lord is it I?" each asked in trembling tone,
"Nay, Lord, we'll die with thee! cried every one."

But in great sorrow, still our Lord did say,
"One shall deny; another shall betray;
All be offended, and flee unto their own—
But for my Father, I should be alone."

After the feast, he took the Cup, and said
"Drink ye of it; for you my blood was shed.
I drink no more, until I drink with you,
In that glad day, when we shall drink it new."

Then blessed the bread, and as each one did take,
"This is my body, broken for your sake."
Oft as ye drink this wine, and eat this bread
Ye do show forth the suffering of your Head.

Bearing the whole world's load of guilt and shame,
Knowing his own would soon deny his name;
Knowing, by all, he would forsaken be,
Thus our Lord went to his Gethsemane.

And still that sacred feast down through the years,
Thy saints commemorate with holy tears.
Keeping the words of him, who said, "This do
In mem'ry of my dying love for you."

In this dark night, Lord, we, thy first-borns meet,
With staff in hand and shoes upon our feet.
Thy precious blood is sprinkled on our hearts;
Thy broken body life to us imparts.

Come, dearest Lord, and bless us while we feast:
Around this board, be thou our honored Guest.
We eat, and drink, and here our vows renew;
Oh to our vows, Lord, keep us ever true!

All earthly hopes and joys, behind us lay;
Lord, we would walk with thee, the narrow way.
What are earth's joys and what its glittering dross?
We gladly leave them all for thy dear cross.

Thy matchless sacrifice doth us afford,
A chance to share thy sufferings, dearest Lord.
Broken with thee, we claim this privilege rare,
That in thy joys we may obtain a share.

On this Atonement Day, we would lay down
Upon the altar, Lord, beside thine own,
Our sacrifice; it is so very small;
Take, Lord, and offer it; it is our all.

Day after day, our testings, Lord, increase:
This side the veil, we know they must not cease.
Scourging, or sword, or flames, whate'er it be,
Help us, dear Lord, in our Gethsemane.

The bitter cup that to thy lips was pressed,
We, too, would drain, nor shrink at bitterness.
These marks of sonship share with our dear Head:
To live with thee, we must with thee be dead.

We'll take the cup tho' filled with grief and pain;
Drink the last drop, and, dying, drink again:
Oh wondrous joy! this time, the cup shall be
The cup of life, and immortality.

Lord, we have had a blessed feast with thee;
Now we go forth that we may tested be.
Help us, that we do not our Lord betray;
When Satan tries to sift, Lord, for us pray.

* * *

Some solemn night, mid scenes of dread, and woe,
While the fierce winds from every quarter blow;
While passions rage, and tempests onward sweep,
Their **last** memorial, thy saints shall keep.

They may be **few** who gather round the board;
Many, be entered into their reward,
Praising the One who led them safely home;
Waiting, until the marriage hour shall come.

Some, weary grew, before the fight was o'er;
Some, through offence, would walk this way no more.
Zealous awhile, methinks, they did run well,
But at the test of Love, they stumbled—fell.

Those who are left, the last of thy dear "feet,"
Keep the last feast before the mercy seat;
Gathering strength for what before them lies,
When they complete in death, their sacrifice.

Some glorious morn the angelic host shall sing!
Some glorious morn the bells of heaven ring!
The Church of Christ has passed her trial stage;
Eternal bliss is hers from age to age.

Before his Father's throne, with love and pride,
Christ shall present his perfect, spotless Bride.
The feast begins; the marriage hour has come;
Christ and his faithful, are forever One.

On that blest day, the Bridegroom shall sit down,
With his dear Bride beside him, on the throne,
To share his joys; to see his blessed face;
In that blest throng, oh Lord, give us a place.
—Z. '09; 92, 93.

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

Luke 23: 33-46.

Golden Text:—"Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do."

THE true view of the cross recognizes that while Jesus is indeed the Teacher of the Church, the Head of the Church, the Bridegroom for the Bride, the Church, it is the Lord who obtained not only the rightful authority to be our Teacher and by and by to be King of the world, but also by the same sacrifice, by the same ransom price, he bought the Church and the world, securing for all mankind release from the original sentence of death, release from the "curse," thus making it possible for God to be just and at the same time the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus. It is when the death of Christ is recognized as the ransom price for Adam, and incidentally for all of his family who lost through his disobedience, that we see its real signification, and how it was impossible under the divine arrangement for the baptism into death to be omitted by our Lord. At the same time we see how all who will be members of his glorious Bride class must also share with him in this baptism into death, and that without the shedding of his blood there could be no remission of sins, no reconciliation to the Father, no resurrection out of death, no reattainment of everlasting life. With the true view before us we have not only feelings of sympathy for our dear Redeemer's sufferings at Calvary, portrayed in this lesson, but we have joy also in his faithfulness, which means our redemption and ultimately through him, in the resurrection, our deliverance from the power of sin and death.

En Route to Calvary

Pilate signed the death-warrant of Jesus under protest, washing his hands as indicating that he considered the matter an outrage of justice, but was helpless as respects further protestation against the will of the people who cried out, "Crucify him!" The scourged Jesus, who knew in advance the result, was the most calm and collected one of the company, fully prepared to drink to its dregs the cup which the Father had allowed to be prepared for him—conscious that the Father's love and care would do nothing amiss and would cause ultimately all things to work together for his good. Soon all was in readiness, and the little procession was formed and wended its way from Pilate's castle along the narrow streets of Jerusalem to the Damascus gate. First went a soldier with a white wooden board, on which was written the nature of the crime of the convict; next followed four soldiers under the command of a centurion, with hammer and nails, guarding Jesus, who bore his own cross; then followed the two robbers, each bearing his own cross and guarded by four soldiers. A multitude thronged the way, the curious throng, the exultant enemies, and some of the Lord's friends. "Mary with other women weeping" (vs. 27). The entire distance from castle Antonio to the hill-top called Calvary is about three-fourths of a mile. Calvary is the Latin name, signifying the skull; Golgotha, the word used by Matthew, also signifies a skull, being the Aramaic, the original language of the Jews in Palestine. The name was probably applied because, looked upon at a little distance, it much resembled a skull. A recent writer thus describes it:—

"Two hundred yards outside the Damascus gate of Jerusalem there is an isolated white limestone knoll, in contour like the crown of the head and about 60 feet high. It contains in its perpendicular face the most remarkable likeness to a skull. The two eyeless sockets, the overhanging forehead, the lines of the nose, the mouth and chin will be plainly seen. It is also concave, and the same color as a skull. On the summit of Golgotha there is a great pit heaped over with stones . . . this pit is filled with the skeletons and bones of criminals, who, from time immemorial, have been crucified and stoned. The bodies of criminals are still hurled into that same pit. A mighty earthquake upheaved this solid earth and split this very rock asunder. To the right of the skull the face of the cliff is oddly riven. . . . At the bottom of the western cliff there is a large garden with a very ancient well. Where it touches the foot of the cliff, six feet below the surface, the rock-hewn sepulcher of our Lord has been discovered. There is now a general concensus of agreement that this is the true Calvary."

En route, and probably near the Damascus gate, a women's society for the mitigation of the sufferings of those executed met the procession and tendered refreshments in the form of a narcotic drink of wine and myrrh, intended to relieve the pains of the crucified by benumbing their sensibilities. Their sympathy was also expressed by their tears. The account gives us to understand that Jesus courteously tasted of the beverage to show his appreciation of the kindness, but declined to drink the potion. He was willing to endure to the end all that the Father might be pleased to permit to come upon him. "More than conqueror" we behold him —we glory in the principles which actuated the Captain of our Salvation in his every act, and we are inspired by his example to press with vigor on, assured by him that "Greater is he that is for us than all that be against us," and that he will not permit any experience to happen to us that he is not able to overrule for our best interests.

Bearing the Cross After Him

Another incident occurred about this time: Simon, a countryman, a Cyrenian, met the procession at a time when, according to tradition, Jesus—weakened through the experiences of the night and through his previous experiences, in which virtue went out of him when he healed the multitudes—was about to faint under the weight of the cross. Simon was compelled to bear the cross after Jesus, but whether this means that Jesus walked before and that Simon carried the cross behind him, or whether it means that Simon walked back of Jesus carrying the end which otherwise was dragging on the ground, we cannot surely know. If, however, it was the latter, the figure becomes all the more striking as an illustration of how the Lord's true followers today are to walk in his footsteps and to join with him in the carrying of the cross—not the literal, but the symbolical.

If we are inclined to wonder where were Peter, John and James and the others of the apostles that they proffered the Master no helping hand, we are to remember that they were "common people" and rather despised as Galileans, and that they had reason to fear that the wrath of the chief priests and rulers against Jesus might also attach more or less to them, and no doubt these considerations had something to do with their backwardness. Besides, they were in a great maze of perplexity at the experiences through which their Master was passing —they understood not until after our Lord's resurrection and his explanation of the Scriptures bearing upon the subject. We are not, therefore, to plume ourselves upon superior courage when thinking how we would delight ourselves in such an opportunity. We are to remember that we have the light and the knowledge and the holy Spirit, which they did not then have, and that thus we have much advantage over them every way.

When we think, however, how nobly Peter, James and John and the others carried on the work of the Lord—how they took up the cross of Christ in the highest sense as his apostles and servants—we have every reason to rejoice and to do them honor. And now the cross is with us. The truths represented in our Lord, in his teachings, in his sacrifice, are still despised and rejected of men—not only by the world, but also by the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees of nominal Christendom. The members of the body of Christ, their hope of glory, honor and immortality, and the blessing of all the families of the earth, are still laughed to scorn, and there is still room for bearing the cross and experiencing crucifixion of the flesh as the representatives of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. How faithful have we been in the past? how faithful will we be in the future? Here is our opportunity also for coming off conquerors through faithfulness in walking in his steps.

"Father, Forgive Them"

Arrived at Calvary, Golgotha, the wooden crosses were laid upon the ground, the victims stretched thereon, and nailed by hands and feet; then the soldiers lifted the crosses and set them into already prepared holes or sockets. The torture of these experiences can better be imagined than described. It was a most cruel death, though perhaps not more cruel than some other forms by which the Lord's followers and others have died. It was not the pain, nor the suffering that was our ransom price—it was the death. The penalty upon father Adam was not the amount of pain he should suffer, but the fact that he must lose life. And so some of Adam's children have lost their lives with great pain, others with little suffering, but over all the sentence reigns, "Dying thou shalt die." It was sufficient in some respects that the Lord should have died, no matter how, but in other respects this was not sufficient. Under the Mosaic law it was decreed, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3:13.) That vilest sentence or curse against sinners under the Law Jesus bore, that he might not only be the Redeemer of the world in general but also the Redeemer of the Jew, as it is written, "He was made a curse for us"—experienced the sentence of the accursed ones under the Law.

It was supposed that it was just about the time that the cross was dropped into the sockets, which would be one of the most agonizing moments of the entire experience, that our Lord in the midst of his agony prayed for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It certainly would be just like our dear Master to utter such a prayer, and we feel very sure that it was the sentiment of his heart, as it was also that of the first martyr, Stephen, who cried in dying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." It is but truthful, however, for us to note the fact that these words credited to our Lord are omitted from the Vatican MS., which is one of the very oldest; and although they appeared in the Sinaitic, they were subsequently stricken out of the latter as though their authenticity were doubted. We cannot, however, have any doubt that the words represented our Master's sentiments toward his enemies, for they are in full accord with his instructions to his followers, Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you, and pray for them.

"They Parted His Raiment"

The four soldiers who had Jesus in charge, after they had set the cross in place, began to look after his personal effects, his clothing, which became their portion according to usage. Little did they think as they divided his garments, and then cast lots for his seamless tunic, which was the most valuable article, that they were thus fulfilling prophecy. (Psa. 22:18.) Just so it is with the whole world; matters are moving on from day to day, prophecies are being fulfilled, many of us have part in them, but few can see and understand, because only a few have the guidance of the holy Spirit. As an illustration of prophecy being fulfilled in our day, note the statement in Daniel about many running to and fro and knowledge being increased, and the approach of a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation—all declared to be indications of the time of the end of this age. (Dan. 12:1-4.) Yet how few of those who see and acknowledge that we are living in peculiar and wonderful times realize that these are fulfilments of prophecy.

Deceptive Outward Evidences

The crowd stood around gaping, and the rulers, joined with them in deriding the one who so recently had ridden upon the ass as the King of the Jews. They made light also of his miracles of healing, of awaking the dead, saying, "He saved others, let him save himself." Let him save himself if he be the Messiah of God, his elect one. How deceived they were, and what a lesson it should teach us of the fallibility of human judgment and the necessity for looking deeply, especially in matters pertaining to God and his Word. If the rulers had any compunctions of conscience respecting their course previously, they did not now manifest it, since they were fully convinced that our Lord was a deceiver, a fraud. This was implied in their willingness to say, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." If they had any qualms of conscience these apparently were satisfied as they beheld Jesus on the cross, helpless and dying. Here was certainly a test, they said. If he were the Messiah undoubtedly he would not thus suffer ignominiously, but would come down from the cross; hence they said, We have proof that our course has been a wise and proper one in ridding our nation of a disturber of its peace, whose teaching would ultimately have overthrown our priestly authority and control of the people.

Similarly, with antitypical nominal spiritual Israel, the Truth is stranger than any fiction, and the masses, in a wrong condition of heart, not guided by the Spirit of the Lord, are blind to it, and also the rulers, the Doctors of Divinity. Doubtless the hour will come when measures of force will be used against all who stand faithful to the Lord and his Truth; and they, too, will suffer under the claim that their death will be for the good of the cause, that it is expedient that injustice in some measure be done to a few rather than that their influence should prevail to any further extent against the systems in power.

Spurred on by the influence of the Jewish rulers, the Roman soldiers also derided the one just crucified as the King of the Jews; and the whole multitude, as they read over his head in Greek, the language of literature—in Latin, the language of the Romans, their rulers—in Hebrew, the language of their own nation, the words, "This is the King of the Jews," were struck with the absurdity of the situation—its impossibility, so to speak,—that a king of the nation should be thus completely denounced and rejected by the people of his realm! Alas, how little they understood his power! He could indeed have come down from the cross, could have refused to die, could have resisted their insults, could have had "more than twelve legions of angels" for his defence. But this would not have been in accord with his consecration, nor in accord with the Father's will, and would have left us as the race of Adam under the sentence of death, without hope of a future life—dead as brute beasts.

How we may rejoice that the dear Redeemer did not when he was reviled revile again, when he was maltreated resent it and do injury to his executioners. How we may rejoice in his faithfulness and love, which enabled him to present the acceptable sacrifice on our behalf. How we can exult also in the great glory, honor, dominion and power everlasting which have come to him as a reward and as a token of the Father's approval, and what a hope it gives us that we also by his grace and assistance may attain to joint-heirship with him in his Kingdom.

"With Me in Paradise"

As the multitude of onlookers were divided, some sympathizing and some deriding, it is not surprising that similar emotions were awakened in the minds of the two robbers crucified with Jesus. In his company, following him, they had been witnesses of his meekness, gentleness, patience and evident faith in God, yet but one of them had the eyes of understanding to appreciate this in any measure. The other, blind as the rulers and the populace, joined with them in reviling the Lord as an impostor, a hypocrite. The first—manifesting a faith which, under all the circumstances, was a remarkable one—reproved his fellow saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss." Our Lord's light indeed shined in darkness and the children of darkness comprehended it not, but his disciples at least sympathized. And so also this poor thief perceived that our Lord was suffering injustice, being buffeted, yet taking it patiently.

Doubtless the thief had heard of Jesus, that he was reputed by some to be the Messiah, and, notwithstanding the incongruous condition of things, the thief realized that with our Redeemer there was a kingly demeanor, and the thought had doubtless been growing in his mind, What if this is some great one from the spirit world, who, as he claims, will by and by in another age establish his Kingdom! What if these rulers are moved by envy and selfishness, and are blind to his teachings! The raillery of his companion only opened his mouth in defense of the Savior. Confessing his own unworthiness, he nevertheless pled for justice, suggesting that both he and his companion thief had reason to be fearful in their dying hour as respects what might be their future in the hands of the Almighty; but here was one traduced, buffeted, crucified, of whom they were witnesses that "This man hath done nothing amiss."

"Lord Remember Me"

Having administered the rebuke he appealed to our Lord, saying, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"—when you receive your kingdom, wherever it may be and under whatever conditions, if it is in your power remember me. I look to you as vastly my superior and the superior of all of us. It seems to me not at all improbable that you are indeed a mighty king, misunderstood by some of your subjects. I venture this appeal to you, even though in the eyes of others it may seem foolish. "Remember me" when you become a king, for I verily believe somehow, sometime, somewhere, you shall have a kingdom, for you certainly would be worthy of it. . . .

"Darkness Over the Land"

It was about noon that Jesus, seeing his mother and John standing near, said, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy mother." We thus see that, in the extremity of his pain even, our Lord was thinking less of himself than of his disciples and of his dear ones. It was about this time that darkness began to settle, beclouding the scene for about three hours. Undoubtedly the shade was more comfortable for the crucified ones than the sunlight of that bright land. And surely it was appropriate that nature should be draped, the shadowy vail drawn over such a scene. Well did it picture the temporary triumph of the power of darkness over him who is the Light of the world. Thanks be to God and to our Lord that through his blessed sacrifice for sins very soon all the shadows will be past, for the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his beams for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

"Gave Up the Ghost"

The last verse of our lesson tells of our Lord's last agonizing cry with a loud voice—consuming the remainder of his strength. His words elsewhere recorded were, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We have already noticed the serene calmness of our dear Master from the time in Gethsemane when the angel strengthened him with the assurance that his course had thus far been pleasing and acceptable in the Father's sight. But it was necessary that he should have the sinner's bitter experience, even to the extent of being entirely cut off from fellowship with the Father. In God's providence, however, this was not prolonged, but merely "for a moment." The Father hid his face from his beloved Son in the sense of withdrawing all spiritual fellowship and communion: for a moment, therefore, our Redeemer was left in a depth of darkness, and his agonizing cry pictures the loneliness of his heart. It was not enough that of the people there were none with him—it must come to this, that the Father should temporarily withdraw sustaining strength and assistance.

Yet our Lord triumphed, and his final words as he breathed his last were, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and having said this "he gave up the ghost." The word ghost was at one time used as a synonym for spirit, and the meaning of this statement is that our Lord gave up his spirit, his breath of life. In other words, he breathed out his last breath, he let go his hold upon life.

But what was meant by the words, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit"—my breath, my life? We answer that when God created Adam he first formed him and then gave him the gift of life. The right to this gift Adam forfeited by disobedience. He was able to transmit to his posterity a spark of vitality, but not perfection of life, because he had lost all right to that. Hence Adam and each member of his race in dying surrenders his life to God under the divine edict that they were unworthy of life, that they could not have it nor claim it either soon or ever. But with our Lord Jesus it was different: he had a life that was not derived from Adam, but, transferred from a heavenly condition, he had a right to life, and it was this life to which he had a right that he was now laying down on behalf of, and as a redemption price for, Adam and his race. In letting go his hold on life he surrendered it to the Father, who had already promised that his life being thus surrendered should entitle him to a higher life under still greater favor, and this he received when he arose from the dead on the "third day," for, as the Apostle declared, "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] in the Spirit"—a spirit being.—1 Pet. 3:18; Z. '06: 375-380.

Responding to Divine Promises

Genesis 28:1-5, 10-22.

"Behold I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."—Gen. 28:15.

JACOB, perceiving that his esteem for the Abrahamic blessing and his perseverance in procuring it, had brought upon him the ill will of his brother Esau, showed that it was not the elder son's share of his father's possessions that he sought, and proposed a journey to the home of his mother's brother. Rebecca, in sympathy with the program, urged it upon Isaac, saying that she was vexed by the heathen wives of Esau and desired that Jacob should select his companion from amongst their God-fearing relatives. To this Isaac assented, and when Jacob was ready for the journey blessed him and confirmed to him again the Abrahamic blessing, saying, "And God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful and multiply thee that thou mayest be a multitude of people, and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and thy seed with thee: that thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings which God gave unto Abraham."

The journey was undertaken on foot and alone. Jacob, after the custom of the people of that country even today, at night wrapped himself in his outer garment and slept in any convenient place, using a stone for a pillow. On the evening of probably his third day from home he slept in a place near to the town of Luz, and was there granted a vision or dream in which he saw a ladder extending from earth to heaven and on it holy angels ascending and descending, and at its top the Lord himself, who spoke to him precious words of encouragement. Thus did the Lord comfort one who trusted in him—one who had so great respect for the divine covenant made with his grandfather Abraham that he esteemed it of more value than all earthly riches and comforts. It was largely on account of his faith in the Abrahamic Covenant that Jacob was now practically an outcast from his home, fleeing in reality through fear of his brother Esau. It is not wonderful that God rewarded such a heroic faith, neither does it surprise us that it was because of the lack of this faith that God took the inheritance of this Covenant from the unbelieving Esau, "profane Esau," as the Apostle describes his sacrilegious disrespect to the divine Covenant.

It is so still: God always honors faith. Those who now for his sake and because of their respect for the divine promises suffer the loss of earthly home and privileges and comforts may be sure that these testings of their loyalty to God will not go unrewarded. The Lord seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth, only with such is he well pleased, only to such does he let down the golden ladder, only to such do the angels of heaven minister, for we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14.) That golden ladder fitly pictures our dear Redeemer, who is the Way to God as well as the Truth and the Life. His own words are, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Upon him all the blessings of God descend to us, and through him our prayers and our offerings are acceptable to the Father. And as the Father spoke to Jacob from the farther end of this ladder, so with every one of us: it is the Father's drawing, the Father's message, the Father's love that our dear Redeemer has revealed to us, and brought us into contact with every good and every perfect gift coming down from the Father of Lights. All things are of the Lord, and all things are by the Son.

The Promises Renewed

From the further end of the ladder Jacob heard the Lord's voice saying, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Here was the very comfort and encouragement that Jacob needed; here he had the assurance not only that his grandfather Abraham had a covenant with God, and that this had not passed to Ishmael but to Isaac, and that now it had not passed to Esau but to himself. He was content with the loss of all things else since he still had the divine favor and was thus acknowledged of God as being the heir of this wonderful promise, the full import of which he could but faintly appreciate. And so it is with all who have heard the Father's voice and been drawn or attracted by his promises, and who have surrendered all other ambitions in life that they might attain to the divine favor and chief blessing as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. No conditions under such circumstances could really be heard; hence, as the Apostle says, we are enabled to rejoice even in tribulation, knowing that even our tribulations are working for us patience and the various experiences of life necessary to our preparation for the glorious position to which we have been called of God. With the Apostle then we can say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him.—Phil. 3:8, 9.

As the Stars and As the Sand

It will be noticed that in this blessing the Lord likens the seed of Jacob to the dust of the earth, but not to the stars of heaven. We remember that in the divine promise to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) the reverse of this is stated: the posterity like unto the stars of heaven is mentioned, but no illustration of the dust of the earth, while to Abraham God used both of these illustrations, saying, "Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore for multitude." In the Abrahamic promise both the spiritual seed, likened to the stars of heaven, and the natural seed, likened to the sands of the seashore, are properly mentioned, because both the heavenly and earthly seeds and the heavenly and earthly blessings proceed from that original Covenant. We remember in this connection the Apostle's statement, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise": we are the spiritual Seed of whom in the First Resurrection the Prophet says, "They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever." (Dan. 12:3.) The Apostle refers to the same class as celestials, comparing them to the stars—"as one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the [first] resurrection of the dead—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:40-44.) Similarly Jacob is referred to by the Apostle as a representative of natural Israel: for instance, telling us of the blessing that shall come upon natural Israel at the end of this Gospel age, when the Spiritual Israel shall have been glorified, he says, "A deliverer shall come out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my Covenant with them when I shall take away their sins."—Rom. 11:25-30.

Not only did the Lord assure Jacob that he was in the right way as an heir for the promise, but, further, that whatever his experiences might be he should remember that the Lord was with him and would not let go of him until he had fulfilled toward him all these gracious promises. What a force, what a power, this experience and the Lord's testimony must have been to Jacob in future years! And it still appertains to natural Israel. The Lord has held that people under his care nor let them go for over thirty centuries, and as surely as it is here written he will accomplish for them the promised blessing and will yet make them a blessing to all nations. Nevertheless, as Jacob had trying experiences in the interim, so his posterity have had and will have until the blessing of the Lord under the New Covenant shall come to them at the hands of the great Mediator of the New Covenant, the glorified Christ Jesus and the Church, which is his body—Spiritual Israel.

A comforting lesson comes to all of us who are Spiritual Israelites also, for we reflect that it is the same unchangeable God who has given us the chief blessing, which the natural Israelite failed to receive, as it is written, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." We, the elect, Israel spiritual, may feel sure that if God's promises to natural Israel are all to be fulfilled his promises to Spiritual Israel are yea and amen in Christ. To us he has also promised that, into whatever situation we may be brought in his providence, he is able to make all things work together for our good, and to bring us off conquerors, yea, more than conquerors, through him that loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

The House of God—The Gate of Heaven

When Jacob awaked from this refreshing vision, dream, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. What a place for awe is this! It is none other than the house of God, the gate of heaven." He was awe inspired, and if the dream inspired the future patriarch with awe, what should the knowledge of the reality bring to us, we who with the eyes of faith see Jesus as the ladder reaching from our humble, fallen condition clear to the heights of the heavenly glory and presence! With what reverence should we look up and hear the Father's voice coming to us through him. How little we should feel ourselves to be, how great the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Surely, as Jacob said, the resting-place of this ladder must be the house of God, the place where we may meet with our Almighty Creator. It was this that was symbolized by the Tabernacle of old, which was called the tent of meeting, not because the Israelites entered it, but because Jehovah could enter and there meet with the people through their representative, the priest, the Lord's presence being indicated by the light on the Mercy Seat, the Shekinah glory.

Similarly the Temple was a house or meeting-place between God and his people, and similarly now with Spiritual Israel—Christ at the lower end of the ladder is the meeting-place between God and man. This meeting-place for the present time is not a building made with hands—is not a Temple nor even a tent, but a house or household of faith, the house or Church of God. Wherever this may be is "Bethel,"—"wherever two or three of you are met in my name there am I in the midst"; there the ladder, at the upper end of which is the Father, touches the earth. And every such assemblage is truly a gate of heaven. What wonder, then, that the Scriptures encourage the Lord's people to meet in his name, to have fellowship with the Father through him, and to have their petitions borne upward to the Father and the blessings to come down from the Father upon them. What wonder that the Apostle exhorted that we should not forget the assembling of ourselves as the manner of some is, and so much the more as we see the day approaching.—Heb. 10:25.

"And I knew it not," said Jacob. And so with us. We knew not at first about the Lord's gracious arrangements and provisions for our blessing. It was only after we had heard his voice and come to an appreciation of his grace and forgiveness that we learned to love him, and that perfect love casts out our fear. The fear or reverence, however, which we had at the beginning of our experience, was a proper and useful one. Whoever comes not to the Father through a reverential fear does not appreciate the privilege of relationship and contact with the great King of the Universe.

Noting and Marking Blessings

After he had awakened, thought over his dream and experienced reverential sentiments, Jacob arose, although it was still early, before the breaking of day. He must take time to acknowledge the divine favors he had just received.

(1) He took the stone upon which his head had rested and set it up as a monument at that spot and poured oil upon it as signifying honor, distinction and appreciation;

(2) He gave the place a name, calling it Beth-el, the house of God, in commemoration of the blessing. . . .

A provision has been made for us along this line by our Lord. Has he not provided the Memorial season, in which annually we are privileged to celebrate our Bethel?—that we are the house of God because with us is the Son of man, the Ladder, the connecting way between earth and heaven, between us and the heavenly Father. How earnest we should be to perpetuate this Memorial, and how we should appreciate the fact that its recurring lessons are amongst the most helpful that could possibly be our experience. . . . Whoever neglects to set up this Memorial, is thereby to this extent evidencing a carelessness and a deficiency in the spirit that is pleasing to the Lord; and in the same degree he fails to have the witness that he pleases the Lord.—Z. '07: 93-95.

The Joys of God's Forgiving Love

Psalm 32

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

THIS Psalm will be quickly recognized as King David's exultant acknowledgment of God's forgiveness of his sins against Uriah. The first verse is the keynote of the entire Psalm. Verses 3-5 record the King's mental distress during the period in which his sins had come as a cloud between him and the sunshine of divine favor which he previously had enjoyed. His distress of mind naturally affected his physical health to such an extent that all of life's duties became burdensome and practically all of its pleasures died. In this fact we perceive that the King was far from the condition of a hardened criminal. His heart had been set for right and for the Lord, and was still set in that direction, even though under temptation he had grossly violated the simplest laws of justice and friendship. The fact that he had gnawings of conscience, that his soul was not at ease under the burden of divine disapproval, were the hopeful signs in the case.

Since David was not a wilful sinner—since he did not at heart approve and rejoice in sin, but despised it, mourned for it—the Lord very graciously guided his affairs so that the lesson became more and more severe to him, until finally he could not bear it longer. Then, when the boil of contrition was fully ripe, the Lord sent his message through Nathan the Prophet to lance it, and his sharp reproof and severe sentence marked the culmination of the King's terrible mental distress and brought him to the point of confession to God and before the nation—to the point of prayer for divine forgiveness and restoration of divine favor, without which he realized that his agony of mind would continue.

The King's prayers were heard—God was gracious to him, his transgression was forgiven, his sin was covered, his iniquity was no longer imputed to him, because his heart was repentant—in it there was no guile. His repentance was sincere, full, thorough. The Psalmist exultingly sings of his own restoration to divine favor, and, doubtless under divine guidance, represented his as being a sample or illustration of what God is willing to do for all who similarly have sincere sorrow for sin, true repentance, who confess their faults and make fresh acknowledgment of their faith. It is safe to say that in thousands of God's people, not only in David's own nation but in every nation, kindred, people and tongue familiar with God's Word, the King's experiences and the lessons of this Psalm, showing his reconciliation with God and the exercise of divine favor toward him, have inspired faith and brought peace and rest to those cast down through weaknesses of the flesh—some of them as grievous or more so, if possible, than David's and some of them for sins less great in the sight of men but realized as being great in the sight of God—sufficient to separate the sinner and his Lord.

As a picture or illustration this does not specially relate to the sinner coming from the alien world and seeking entrance into God's family: it rather represents one who had already enjoyed divine favor and lost it—one who had gotten from the light into darkness. The Scriptures clearly point out to us that even after we have become children of God it is possible to "fall away." They show us two classes of those who fall. One class is described in Heb. 6:4-7; 10:26-31: these we may have no hope for, because at heart they have become sympathetic with sin; they are wilful sinners, as the Apostle here describes. It would not be appropriate that God should exercise his mercy toward those who, after having come to a clear knowledge of the Truth, wilfully, preferably, approvingly delight in sin. The only thing remaining for these, as the Apostle declares, is judgment which will devour them as adversaries of God and adversaries of righteousness. Of this class the Apostle declares, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."—1 John 5:16.

It is of the second class that the Apostle says there is a sin not unto death—one which may be repented of, which may be forgiven, and out of which the transgressor may come with valuable lessons which may ultimately result in blessings of knowledge and experience which will be helpful to him in future conflicts and triumphs. David's sin was of this latter class—not wilful. not approved by him. but of the class of sins referred to by the Apostle when he says. "If any man sin. we have an Advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1.) Of the same class of sins the Apostle says. "He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." and again. "Though he fall yet shall he not be utterly cast down." The fact is that transgression that is wilful and approved by the heart means an utter fall from divine favor in every sense of the word. while stumbling into sin contrary to the will. through weakness of the flesh and temptation. is to be considered a stumbling from which there is every hope of recovery.

Some one will perhaps argue that practically every transgression is a wilful one. because the Lord's people. however weak in body. have still the power to will aright if they would. Such are inclined at times to accuse themselves of wilful sin. and to fear that they are under the ban of the second death. We point. however. to David's case as an illustration of what is not esteemed of the Lord to be a wilful sin. King David deliberately planned for days and weeks and months in connection with his transgression. It cannot be denied that there was a measure of wilfulness in it. but there was a measure of something else also: namely. of weakness of the flesh. inherited as a member of the race from father Adam. Only divine judgment could clearly. distinctly discern how much of David's sin should properly be accredited to wilfulness and how much to weakness. That it was not wholly weakness or ignorance is evident. and that it was not wholly wilfulness is equally evident. It was therefore what we might term a mixed sin. The proof that it was not wholly wilful is found in the fact that David's conscience afterward. before being reproved by the Lord through the Prophet. recognized his sin and realized the barrier which it had raised between the Lord and his soul. Had the sin been wilful. instead of feeling sorrow and contrition the King would have felt disposed to go on in the course of sin still farther. and would have had no longings for divine forgiveness and reconciliation. His desires for these prove to us that, although he had deviated so grievously from the proper paths. his heart. his will, was still on the side of the Lord and of righteousness. Let this serve as a lesson and illustration for all who have fallen into sin and who long for divine forgiveness and reconciliation. Let such accept the mercy of the Lord by faith and rejoice therein as did King David. Let them remember that those who have sinned the sin unto death it is impossible to renew again unto repentance—impossible to bring them back to a condition where they would be truly contrite and repentant for their evil course.

True repentance implies a rectification of the wrong to the extent of one's ability. David's sin being a public one. known to the nation, it was appropriate that the repentance should be as public as was the sin, and we have reason to believe that David would not have received restoration to divine favor had he not been thoroughgoing in his confession and his endeavors to make good the wrong he had done. His course had led some to blaspheme God's name (2 Sam. 12:14). and it was appropriate that his repentance should. so far as possible. offset this. And so the story of David's repentance has come down the ages with the story of his crime; and while the one has given occasion to blasphemers. the other has given hope and encouragement to many overtaken in faults. who. like David, at heart were loyal to the Lord.

We are to distinguish sharply between forgiveness of sin and remission of penalties. In this case we see that David's sin was forgiven. yet the punishment which the Prophet had foretold came upon him in due time. Thus we see that forgiveness here stands not for judicial forgiveness. which would have exonerated the forgiven one from all punishment. but it stands merely for the removal of divine disfavor which had come upon the King as one of the results of his transgression. We are to notice also that the King had not in his mind the thought of escaping the punishment which God had foretold and described; his joy was in respect to the restoration of communion between himself and the Lord—the removal of the sin-born cloud which had hidden from him for a time the light of the divine countenance. the smile of heaven. the fellowship of God. And so it will be today with all who, falling into sin wilfully, repent thereof and seek a renewal of the fellowship of the Father and of the Son from the right standpoint. Their moving desire will not be simply escape from punishment. but specially a renewal of communion of soul broken by transgression. It is in full accord with this that the New Creation at the present time rejoices in forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father through the Son. yet live under practically the same conditions as the world, subject to the aches, pains, trials. difficulties and disappointments which belong in general to the fallen race because of original sin. The blessings of our new relationship to God consist not in our release from the burdens and difficulties of the groaning creation. but in the realization that we are no longer under divine condemnation, no longer children of wrath even as others. but brought nigh unto God in fellowship and communion through the blood of Christ. Our hope of deliverance from the burdens which afflict the whole groaning creation are centered in the promised Kingdom blessings at the second advent of our Lord. Inspired by these hopes and promises we sorrow not as do others. but are enabled to rejoice in tribulation and to wait patiently for the Lord's time and for the Lord's way—the First Resurrection.

This thought. namely. that in the present time our sins are merely covered from divine notice through the merit of our Lord,—that they are merely forgiven or given over or set aside, are hidden and not actually blotted out— is very clearly stated by the Apostle Peter (Acts 3:19-21) when, preaching under the influence of the holy Spirit, he declared that his hearers should repent and be converted to the Lord. so that their sins might be blotted out when the times of refreshing should come—the times of restitution—the Millennial age and Kingdom.

In that glorious Millennial day the Church, now reconciled, will first pass inspection, and those counted worthy will share in the first resurrection, and the bodies they will then receive will be perfect, without blemish and without flaw—very different from the mortal bodies of the present time, all of which are more or less marred by sin, mentally and physically. The receiving of the new bodies perfected will mean that all the blemishes, all the marks of sin for this class, were blotted out in the tomb, in the flesh, their spiritual bodies being perfect, even as it is written of this first resurrection class: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body."

The world not having received reconciliation, not having received forgiveness of sins, will not receive the blotting out of sins in the Millennial morning. The great blessing that will come to the world of mankind as distinguished from the Church, the body of Christ, the little flock, the elect of the present time, will be the blessing of forgiveness—full, free. The great atonement day (the Gospel age) will then have closed, its better sacrifices will all then be in the past, its blood of atonement will then have been presented before the Father and will have been accepted on behalf of the whole world. As a result of this acceptance, the divine forgiveness will reach the whole world through Christ—a remission of the sentence pronounced upon the world in the person of Adam. This is specifically stated by the Apostle, saying, "As by the offence of one judgment [sentence] came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift [will come] upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. 5:18.) But as forgiveness to David did not mean a repudiation of such penalties as were due him because of the measure of wilfulness contained in his sins, and as forgiveness in this Gospel age to the Church does not mean an immediate release from the penalties that are upon the race, so likewise the forgiveness of the world's sins at the dawn of the Millennium and the beginning of Messiah's reign will not mean the removal of all the marks of sin, the disabilities, death conditions, which come upon all men partly through their own wrongdoing. As with the Church now, forgiveness of sins means a covering of those sins, that we may be treated as though we were not sinners: so with the world in the next age—the forgiveness of the world's sins will mean that thenceforth Christ stands for the whole world before God as the covering of their sins, and that on account of the sacrifice paid by Christ on behalf of the world the sentence of everlasting death upon them is annulled. The work of Christ and of the Millennial Kingdom will be to lift up all who will of the world of mankind to the full perfection of their human nature, so that at the close of that age they may be perfect and entire as human beings. The work of the Millennial age will therefore be a work of blotting out sins—blotting out the evidences and traces of sin in body and mind. The weaknesses and impairments which sin has brought upon humanity will be thus overcome, and it is for this reason that that age is called the times of restitution, the times in which gradually the original likeness of God will be brought back to all those who will accept the divine favor through the great redemption.

In verse six King David suggests that his own experience should be helpful to others who at heart were godly—desiring God's way of righteousness, but who had stumbled in the way. He advises that they pray to the Lord promptly—that they should seek him while he may be found. David's own experiences seemed to teach him that every day removed him farther and farther from fellowship with the Lord. His exhortation is that in order that the floods of great waters of trouble should not reach such an one, he would be spared much by going promptly to the throne of heavenly grace to make confession and to obtain mercy and grace to help in future times of need.

In verse seven the King reverts to his own experiences and how he had found peace in the Lord—a hiding-place in which he could have rest: and although he knew to look forward to the prescribed punishments, his heart now being in fellowship with the Lord he could realize that the Lord's presence would be with him in those punishments and preserve him in that trouble, and that he would be, so to speak, enabled to hear the heavenly messengers singing songs of his deliverance even whilst in his affliction.

The concluding verses of the Psalm represent the Lord as the speaker, instructing David and all of his people who, like David, desire the Lord's guidance and feel wretched and troubled when any earth-born cloud intervenes between the Lord and their souls. The Lord engages to be the teacher, the instructor of all such: he will overrule their affairs, he will make all things to work together for good. Even their stumblings shall not prove disastrous; but because they maintain the spirit of devotion to the Lord and to the principles of righteousness, he will make even their missteps to become valuable lessons, that they may be henceforth less liable to stumble, and learn to look unto the Lord and to be guided in their goings by his eye.

Those whom the Lord instructs, and who will receive his instruction, will not be like the horse or mule that must be turned and guided by force. Their hearts will be so in sympathy with the Lord that he can deal with them otherwise, to their blessing and joy. The wicked shall have their sorrows, but the Lord's people will not be counted in among these: for his mercy shall be with them, restoring their souls. Therefore this class, through the Lord's mercy, will be counted righteous—not that they were righteous of themselves, but counted righteous through the divine provision in Christ. These may be glad in the Lord, though they could not be glad in themselves. These, because upright in heart even though prone to sin and full of weaknesses according to the flesh, may be brought off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood—may shout for joy as they realize the abundance of the divine provision "for the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—1 John 2:2; Z. '03: 394-397.

Grace and Peace Multiplied

2 Pet. 1:1-4.

MANY Christians refer with special delight to the day when first they realized the pardoning grace of God and the consequent peace that silenced all their fears and enabled them to realize the love of God to them personally. And well indeed may we sing with all such—

"O happy day that fixed my choice
On thee, my Savior, and my Lord."

But if we have to refer back to the day when we took our first steps as babes in Christ, as the **happiest** day in our life, there has been something wrong in our experience: we have not been developing as we should and experiencing that wealth of divine favor which is the privilege of every consecrated and faithful soul.

To all such the Apostle Peter sends greeting, saying, Grace and peace be **multiplied** unto you. If our hearts leaped for joy when we realized the first droppings of grace and peace, how should our songs abound now, with the increasing evidences of divine favor—with the multiplication of grace and peace now experienced. But is it really so with us? are grace and peace really multiplied to us? The Apostle indicates that such should be the experience of all who have obtained like precious faith with him (verse 1); and, further, that this increase of blessing should come through an increasing knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.—Verse 2.

Some Christians seem to look for the increase of divine favor and peace through other agencies than the knowledge of God; but such is not God's order. Our Lord prayed for his disciples, saying, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The knowledge of the truth is the sanctifying power, the peace-and-joy-imparting power, and is the precious evidence of divine grace or favor. Those who expect to be sanctified without this divinely provided agency and who expect to enjoy abiding peace without it, make a great mistake. Their peace may last while the sun of prosperity shines, and so long as they do not permit themselves to think beyond the immediate present, or to consider future possibilities; or they may for a time, upon a very slight knowledge of the truth, build up beautiful castles of wood, hay and stubble, with here and there a precious stone of truth, and for a time be filled with even ecstatic joy over them; but soon such flimsy structures must fall, and the transient joy end in bitter disappointment—in a loss of both joy and peace and, measurably at least, of the realization of the divine favor.

But such disappointments are never realized by those whose peace has its fountain in the perennial springs of God's eternal truth; for, the Apostle says, he "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." But this knowledge of God is not only an intellectual knowledge of his great and loving plan: it includes also a personal acquaintance with God, a heart to heart communion and fellowship with him—an established sympathy of love and common interest and co-operation. Such a knowledge or acquaintance with God is gained through the study of his precious word with reverence and diligence, through the personal application of all of the principles of that word in every day life and through secret prayer and communion with God.

If we would have this inspiring acquaintance with God we must not forget our privilege of secret prayer. Remember the Lord's words,—"Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is invisible, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee." "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God." And again, "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

Thus it is our privilege to know God; but only those who have had the blessed experience can appreciate how greatly the grace and peace of God can be multiplied to us through the knowledge of him thus acquired. As we draw near to him in prayer and communion and the study of his precious Word, we are made to understand the wealth of the divine love and favor toward us who are in Christ Jesus, and who, through entire consecration of ourselves to God, have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust [the worldly desires and ambitions]. We learn that to us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be made partakers of the divine nature; that we are called to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; that, if we are faithful to our covenant of entire consecration to God, we shall be made like him and see him as he is; that we may behold the King in his beauty; and that through us in the ages to come God will manifest the exceeding riches of his grace. Oh, what heights of glory are we called to share with our beloved Lord; and what fathomless love is manifested toward us in Christ Jesus!

In humble thankfulness let us ponder these precious promises more and more as in secret we bow at the throne of the heavenly grace: and here let the holy spirit of God apply the instruction to our hearts, and so may we be filled with the spirit, and grace and peace be multiplied unto us.—Z. '93: 155, 156.

◆

As children of God we have been called to a position of great favor and advantage. Our Heavenly Father has revealed to us his plans and purposes and has condescended to take us into his fellowship and active co-operation; and so grand and extensive is our outlook of the future that we are able to view the present life in a very different light from that in which the world views it.—Z. '96: 66.

Perfect Through Suffering

God never would send you the darkness,
  If he felt you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to his guiding hand
  If the way were always bright;
And you would not care to walk by faith,
  Could you always walk by sight.

'Tis true he has many an anguish
  For your sorrowful heart to bear,
And many a cruel thorn-crown
  For your tired head to wear;
He knows how few would reach heaven at all
  If pain did not guide them there.

So he sends you the blinding darkness,
  And the furnace of seven-fold heat:
'Tis the only way, believe me,
  To keep you close to his feet—
For 'tis always so easy to wander
  When our lives are glad and sweet.

Then nestle your hand in your Father's
  And sing, if you can, as you go;
Your song may cheer some one behind you
  Whose courage is sinking low;
And, well, if your lips do quiver—
  God will love you better so.—Z. '92:288.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

FAITH A REAL SUBSTANCE

The Christian who walks closely with the Master finds the truth of the Apostle's words that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (proof, conviction) of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1.) Faith is not only a ground work, or basis, for our hopes (itself also having a ground work in proven facts), but it is a real substance—a mental substance, so to speak, which stimulates and clarifies the mind. Faith is not a substance that we can hold in our hands or walk on with our feet. But it becomes a strength to our minds as we progress in the knowledge of God and of the things which God has to give to those who love him above all else and who seek to render him loving, devoted service. Faith becomes as real and tangible to us as any material substance—even more so; for the things upon which our faith lays hold are eternal. —Z. '15:199.

◆

It is not enough that we have read the Word of God and gained a general knowledge of its principles and precepts and the plan and purpose of our God; there is yet more, much more, to be learned and done. There must be a daily laying up of its treasures of wisdom and counsel in the heart, and the working out of its principles in the life. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them," said one of the saints of old; "and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." (Jer. 15:16.) So must we also feed upon them in our hearts.—Z. '97:23.

◆

Saul of Tarsus never saw Jesus personally in the flesh to persecute him, but whatsoever was done to the least of his disciples was done to Jesus. This still is true, and will continue to be true until the body of Christ, which is the Church elect, shall have been completed and glorified. Meantime, he that harms one of the least of the Lord's little ones, and he that gives a cup of cold water to one of the least of these, does it to the Lord of glory himself.—Z. '13:46.

Pilate asked Jesus if he were not aware of the fact that he had power either to set him at liberty or to inflict the punishment desired by the people. Our Lord's answer was serene, that Pilate could have no power at all except as it was permitted him by the heavenly Father. Ah, this was the secret of our Lord's composure! He had given his life, his all; he had surrendered to the Father his every interest; he had confidence in the Father's love and wisdom, and was willing, therefore, to drink of the cup which the Father had poured, rejoicing to do the will of him that sent him and to finish that work. So with the Lord's followers throughout this age—in proportion as they, like him, have been enabled to realize the fulness of their consecration and at heart have been filled with his spirit and loving submission to the Father's will—in that same proportion they have been able to be calm under most severe and trying ordeals, so that the world even has marvelled at their composure and self-control, the peace of God passing all understanding ruling in their hearts.—Z. '06:364.

◆

There are people who in the future will find that they have lost much because they have not been subject to the divine arrangements.—Z. '13:26.

◆

What the Lord is looking for at the present time is the spirit of sacrifice or self-denial—not merely the spirit of obedience to commands. Few, of course, would resist a Divine command, if thundered from heaven. Our test is more crucial than that. It is a test of obedience to what we understand to be the will of God or the privilege of service in his cause. Those who delight to do his will, those who delight to serve his cause, even at the cost of sacrifice to earthly interests, are the very ones he is now seeking.—Z. '10:365.

◆

It is not strange, but reasonable, that God should test severely, yea, with "fiery trials" (1 Pet. 4:12), the faith and love of those invited to so high a station. If they be not loyal and trustful to the last degree, they surely are "not fit for the Kingdom," its responsibilities and its divine honors. Nor should it surprise us to be informed by God's Word that only a "few," a "little flock," will gain the prize to which many are called and for which many consecrate.—Z. '94 : 40.

◇

Principles may never be abandoned for any consideration; but **liberties** and **personal rights** may be ignored in the interest of others frequently and to Divine pleasing. The Apostle Paul was ready to go to any length in defense of principle (Gal. 2: 5-11), but in the sacrifice of earthly rights and privileges and liberties for the sake of Christ and the Church, the Apostle evidently came next to our Lord Jesus, and is a noble example to all the Church.

"How wise are God's commands;
How sure His precepts are!"—Z. '11 : 440.

◇

If we are not jealous for the truth we are not worthy of it, and some of the deceptions of this "evil day" will surely number us among its victims, for it is in this time of the Lord's presence that Satan is to work so mightily, with great power to deceive and with signs of success and with lying wonders of error. His various schemes will have great success, in comparison with which the success of the truth will seem small; for with these, as with Gideon's band, it will be a time of sifting, and "who shall be able to stand?" But let those who stand girt about with divine truth fear nothing: the Lord is permitting these delusions that they may serve his own wise and benevolent purposes in the separating of the worthy from the unworthy, and for the manifestation of those who are at heart loyal to him.—Z. '92 : 38.

◇

While the Court condition seems to represent at the present time (prior to Passover, 1918), **all those** who are approaching God and loving righteousness and desiring harmony with Him, it appears as though, with the closing of this Age, there will be an adjustment of matters by which all those who have not come to the point of full consecration and to the point of Spirit-begetting, who would not belong to the household of faith and to the "Church of the First-born," in the absolute sense, will go out and cease to be recognized as in the Court. Meantime the class who have already made consecration, "presented their bodies living sacrifices," and received the begetting of the Spirit and enjoyed for a time the privileges of being members of the Body of Christ—these, failing to maintain their standing, are represented as **separate** from the "little flock" class, at the end of this Age. Their condition apparently is represented by the Court condition thereafter.—Z. '11 : 349.

◇

The Church will always be in the **heavenly condition.** Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that she will be restricted to **one place** rather than to another. The intimation is that after the Church has experienced her change, she will be absent from the earth for a while and will be brought into the presence of Jehovah, the great King. She will be arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold—"in raiment of needlework." (Psa. 45:13-15.) These statements are figurative expressions indicative of the beautiful character wrought out in all who become actual members of the Body of Christ.—Z. '13 : 51.

◇

We are to remember, however, that none can enter, either on the earthly or on the heavenly plane of instantaneous perfection in the resurrection unless his trial be finished successfully in the present life and by passing into death.—Z. '11 :182.

◇

There is **no possibility** for any one to get into this special elect class, "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," **without knowing it.**—Z. '11 : 86.

◇

If we could but get a proper conception of the mighty potentialities of the tongue, it would make us almost afraid to speak a word, lest we should speak amiss. Such a fear would be very helpful to us, as gradually, then, a desire to speak the words of justice and love and soberness should burst the restraint and find utterance, while the dread of the evil would still guard every expression. The result would be greater Godlikeness.—Z. '09 :126.

◇

Psalm 23 is a prophetic one which represents Christ and the Church—their experiences throughout this Gospel Age. Surely our Lord's cup of suffering overflowed. And surely it has been the same overflowing cup which he has presented to his faithful followers throughout this Age. It represents sorrows unto death. However, prophetically our Lord and his followers are represented as rejoicing in this cup of fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, because of the glorious results. Our Lord said respecting it, "I delight to do thy will, O God." And again, "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?"

In Psalm 116:13 this cup of death is represented as a cup of salvation, because only thereby can our salvation and the world's be attained. Both Christ and his followers have rejoiced in their tribulations, not counting their lives dear unto them, that they might win the great prize. Notice the context: "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord (for needed aid.) I will pay my vows unto the Lord. . . . precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The Vow of Christ and his members is faithfulness unto death—the drinking of the cup. The promised reward is the crown of glory in the Kingdom. This is represented as another cup of the future. Only those who join with the Master in drinking his "cup of the New Testament" or New Covenant will share with him by participation in the cup of joy and glory, which the Father will pour for the faithful at the end of this Age—at the close of this Antitypical Day of Atonement and its sacrifices.—Z. '10 : 53.

◇

If any of the Lord's people suffer stripes as punishments for partially wilful sins, such sufferings are not part of the sufferings of Christ, but are stripes for discipline. The sufferings which we have with Christ are of the same nature as his, namely, because of our loyalty to him and the principles of righteousness for which he stands.—Z. '05:54.

◆

Remember that "rarest gems bear hardest grinding," and let this comfort and inspire us in every difficulty and trial.—Z. '17:270.

◆

After having entered this strait gate and narrow way, we should continue therein—not necessarily without **stumbling,** not necessarily without **making mistakes**; if we can go on ever so falteringly, to the best of our ability and with hearts loyal to the Lord, we shall be granted to sit on His Throne—members of His Bride class.—Z. '12:212.

◆

The strongest of the brethren need the help, the encouragement, the assistance of others. The Lord has so arranged it that we may not feel ourselves entirely self-sufficient.—Z. '03:40.

◆

Our humility will be proportionate to our appreciation of divine goodness and our thankfulness therefor. The grateful, thankful heart may go on from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge, from attainment to attainment; but if gratitude begins to wane and our advantages are accepted either as matters of our own attainment or of good luck, in that same proportion we will find ourselves growing cold spiritually, and with unthankfulness will come unholiness, spiritual self-conceit and pride, and all of this will lead to spiritual dearth, and if persisted in to spiritual death.

"Give me a thankful heart, from every murmur free,
A heart which always feels thy blood, so freely shed
for me." —Z. '02:286.

◆

Our Lord Jesus gave to the Apostle Paul the assurance, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9.) All things shall work together for good to us because we love Him, because we have taken His yoke, have become yoke-fellows with Him. We rejoice in the privilege of suffering with Him. The flesh may suffer, but the spirit rejoices. We shall not be tried beyond our strength. His burden is light. No one is required to do more than he is able to perform. If we have the right spirit we shall be glad to do all that we can accomplish. One who would not be willing to do all in his power would not be accounted by the Lord as faithful. The Master's burden is light if it be accepted in sincerity and in truth, and only those who so receive it can become yoke-fellows with Him.—Z. '16:118.

◆

If filled with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, we, like him, will desire to be as free as possible from entangling earthly affairs, and to have our time as free as possible for the Lord's service, and then to devote all energy, ability and effort to that service.—Z. '02:265.

◆

An important lesson for all of the Lord's people to learn, is that the Lord himself has full charge and direction of the affairs of his Church; that he who blesses it with his holy spirit, and with the light of the knowledge of God, is the same one who has permitted a restraining of the persecutions and siftings from without and from within. Those who learn this lesson thoroughly are the only ones who, amid all the affairs of life, can rest themselves fully in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Let us learn to trace divine providences in the past, and to appreciate them and to apply them as far as possible, to affairs of the present time; and then to trust the Lord, even where we cannot trace him, knowing that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.—Z. '15:60.

◆

God's people should come so fully into accord with him and his plans that they would neither be surprised nor disappointed in their fulfilment.—Z. '02:136.

◆

The spiritually minded will be asking for the **spiritual** food, the **spiritual** necessities, day by day and will more and more realize that as the Heavenly Father clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens, so, much more, he will care for the temporal interests of all who are seeking first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness,—the righteousness which it will enforce.—Z. '98:30.

◆

As the time for the exaltation of the Church draws nearer and nearer, the testing may be expected to increase until all the unworthy ones are weeded out. "He will gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend (those who put off the wedding garment of Christ's imputed righteousness, etc.), and them which do iniquity (those who practice sin, who are not fully in sympathy with the principles and ways of righteousness as laid down in the Lord's Word)." And "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."—Z. '98:77.

◆

The Editor (Brother Russell) does not recall having from childhood asked the Lord for physical strength or health. He has known times when his physical strength was not great and when there were opportunities for service which seemed to require more strength than he had. Then he has taken pleasure in going before the Lord in prayer and saying that he was trusting that the necessary strength and all else which the Lord saw best to give him would be provided; but that if the Lord saw best that he should not be able to make a satisfactory presentation, he would still do his part and leave the rest with the Lord, knowing that whatever the Lord permitted would be the best experience for him.

This course has always been sufficient. In forty years of active service, he has never missed a meeting because of lack of strength, although there have been times when his friends have said, "You cannot possibly speak tonight!" His reply invariably has been, "If the Lord gives me strength, I will go to the meeting place, and will trust Him for strength to speak." At one time he almost fainted on the platform; but grace sufficient has always been his portion.—Z. '13:86.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY-FOUR

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"The Lord Is My Shepherd"

"The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want."—Psa. 23:1.

IN comparing himself to a shepherd, the Lord made a very apt illustration of his care for his people—a care which is always solicitous for their welfare, watchful for their interests, patient with their youth and inexperience and untiring in its ministry of love.

But it is only when the individual can say in his heart, The Lord is **my** Shepherd, that this blessed ministry of the good Shepherd can be realized. It is when we become his sheep that we learn the value of the Shepherd's care: and the man who has had experience under the care of the good Shepherd can truly say with the Psalmist, "I shall not want." He shall not want for the temporal necessities of the present life—"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isa. 33:16; Matt. 6:33, 34.) He shall not want for light and be left to walk in the darkness of this world, but unto him shall be given the light of life. (John 8:12.) He shall not want the necessary care and discipline to fit him for the future life; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) He shall not lack the consolations of divine grace in times of trial and affliction; for it is written, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9.) He shall not want for fellowship and sympathy; for the Lord himself hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5); and again, "Lo, I am with you alway."—Matt. 28:20.

Surely no **good** thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly—as true sheep. He will protect them in every danger, and guard them with a shepherd's care.—Z. '94:392.

Of course no one will decide to go into darkness and away from the Lord and the Truth. The test is a more crucial one than that. The question is will we take and keep the path that leads nearer and nearer to the Lord, and be permitted more and more fellowship with him, a fuller and fuller knowledge of the minutiae of the great plan of the ages which he is out-working, and a greater share in that work with the great Chief-Reaper, or will we allow self-interest or self-conceit or ambition or spiritual sloth or the cares of this life to turn us aside from the path of full consecration which our Master trod and in which we have pledged ourselves to follow, in his footsteps.

The right path is still the "narrow path" of **self-abasement** and **self-denial**—the path of meekness and humility: and it will require as much effort and grace to walk it this year as last, or possibly more. —Z. '95:3.

◆

Dear brethren, it is not enough to make a good consecration: it is not enough that for a time we fight a good fight. No, indeed! God is not accepting to the Kingdom those who once were faithful. He desires to have those who were once faithful, who were afterwards faithful, who are **always** faithful!—Z. '14:376.

◆

"Keep thy heart with all diligence." We are not to think of God as keeping our hearts, and we are not to pray to him to do for us what he instructs us to do for ourselves.—Z. '10:212.

◆

Reverence for all good things is surely appropriate to all who love the Lord and love his righteousness. Increasing knowledge would make us increasingly reverential, not only in heart, but also in outward demonstration.—Z. '07:333.

◆

Those who are most fervent in spirit and most fully in accord with the Lord are very careful that not even a **single spot** shall soil their robe of righteousness.—Z. '10:166.

◆

It is not sufficient to declare our intention; God allows the difficulties and trials of life to prove our faithfulness to the sacrifice we have made.—Z. '12: 111.

◆

We should both watch and pray, labor and wait, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. We should do all in our power while trusting to the Lord for the results, assured that He is able to make up all of our deficiencies, but at the same time leaving as little deficiency as possible.—Z. '05:331.

◆

One of the ten commandments given to the Jews forbade their taking the name of the Lord **in vain**; and although this commandment was not given to spiritual Israel we can readily see how the spirit of it comes to us. The spirit of that commandment applied to us would not relate to profane swearing, cursing, etc., but rather to a misappropriation of the Lord's name. We have taken the name of Christ as our name. We are counted as members of the body of Christ. The holy name of the Head belongs to all the members of the body. The honored name of the Bridegroom belongs to his espoused. What carefulness the thought of this should give us, and how appropriately we should say to ourselves:—"I must see to it that I have not taken the Lord's name in **vain**,—that I appreciate the honor, dignity and responsibility of my position as his representative and ambassador in the world. I will walk circumspectly, seeking as far as possible to bring no dishonor to that name, but contrariwise to honor it in every thought and word and deed.—Z. '04:73.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Finishing Touches of Christian Character

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."—Phil. 4:8.

MANKIND in general does too little thinking, and what it does do is more or less along improper lines, and built upon false bases or premises. Nevertheless, all will agree as respects human welfare, there is a power in thought second to no other power in the universe. Few, perhaps, realize to what extent this is true,—to what extent their own happiness and well-being is dependent upon right thinking,—to what extent whole communities and nations owe their happiness or misery to their right or wrong thinking upon the important problems of life. Words are a power in the world, but only in proportion as they awaken thoughts and lead to actions; words, thoughts, deeds, is the order. Truly did the wise man say, "As a man thinketh in his heart so, is he." (Prov. 23:7.) If he thinks justly, he will speak and act justly; if his thoughts are selfish and ignoble, his words will be deceitful and his conduct dishonest.

It is because the power of thought is to a considerable extent recognized that it is appealed to on every hand. The teacher appeals to it; the preacher appeals to it; the politician appeals to it; the financier appeals to it; the sociologist appeals to it; the thousands of pamphlets, books, newspapers and magazines published in every land and in every tongue are all appealing to thought. Thought, indeed, may be said to be the great engine which is moving the whole world in its every department. The difficulty is that few are of logical and discerning mind, the fall having affected every member of the human family, has disordered our reasoning faculties; and charlatans and demagogues and self-seekers very frequently take advantage of the weak mental state of humanity to delude with sophistry, and thus to hinder and obscure correct thinking and reasoning. Against the great force and weight of selfishness in its every member does humanity thus labor, as well as against the wiles of Satan; and it is not surprising that generally it is misled and deceived, because added to its incubus of false premises it must struggle also against its own inertia, sluggishness and inaptitude.

The Lord, also appeals to the power of the mind through his Word, and urges upon his people that they be "transformed by the renewing of their minds." (Rom. 12:2.) Indeed, it may be said that the cultivation of the power of thought began with God's people, and that so far as religious matters are concerned it has in no particular degree gone from them. While heathen religions seek to restrain the intellect and appeal chiefly to the passions, prejudices and fears, the Lord, to the contrary, calls to his people, saying, "Come, let us reason together." (Isa. 1:18.) We are willing to admit that nominal Christendom has not heeded the Lord's invitation to any great extent—that very largely nominal Christians avoid thought on religious subjects, and especially avoid reasoning; but we hold that to the extent they thus violate the divine arrangement they have not their "senses exercised by reason of use," and are to be esteemed, at very best, only babes in Christ. Heb. 5:13, 14.

We are willing to agree also that thinking may be a very dangerous matter in the absence of absolute knowledge upon which to base and exercise our reasoning faculties; but the Lord has protected his faithful along this line by providing us in his Word with the proper basis for reasoning on all subjects involving our duty to our Creator and to our fellow-creatures. The Scriptures lay down certain lines, and invite God's people **to reason within these lines of revelation**, and by reasoning thus to taste and see that the Lord is gracious; and come to a clearer knowledge of him, a better understanding of his character and plan. Many who are awakened to independent thinking are careless of the **limitations** of the divine revelation, and consequently the influence of the divine Word upon them is a mental liberty and enlightenment which, lacking the divine control, is very apt to go to the extreme of license, selfishness, self conceit and infidelity. Wherever the Bible has gone it has been the torch which has led civilization; millions have profited by its enlightening influence, though only comparatively few walk close to its light and within its prescribed limitations of reason and conduct; and these few are the true Christians—the "wheat" of this age, "the first-fruits unto God of his creatures," which God is now harvesting.—James 1:18.

The Control of Thought

Some are inclined to believe that since man's brain differs from every other man's brain to some extent, therefore his thinking must necessarily be different; in a word, that a man can only think in harmony with his brain construction. But we reply, Not so; each may learn to weigh and balance his own thoughts, to curb some and to encourage others; but to do this each must have before him an ideal of character, to be copied. Thoughts can be controlled just as words and actions can be controlled: the will is at the helm, and must decide which thoughts and sentiments it will entertain and encourage, and which it will repel. It is necessary, therefore, first of all for the will to be rightly directed, and secondly, to be strong, and to use its power in the control of thought:—in curbing those thoughts which it recognizes as evil, and in stimulating those which it recognizes as good, helpful, beneficial. . . .

Our Text Addresses the Saints

A common mistake amongst people would be to address the words of our text on the subject of right thinking to sinners, to evil-doers and evil thinkers; but this is a mistake. The entire Epistle to the Phillippians is addressed to "All the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi" (1:1); and the exhortation is applicable to all the saints everywhere, but not to others than saints—not to the worldly, not even to the household of faith, until they have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord. It would be useless to address others along this line; the exhortation would be of no effect. Hence, the exhortation of this lesson is not specially applicable to any but the most advanced Christians—not even to the "babes in Christ," but only to those who are somewhat matured in the new life. As for the babes who are not developed new creatures, they will have their attention very thoroughly occupied with the cruder elementary lessons, respecting the coarser sins which the new creature must abhor and battle against. This text addresses those who have made considerable progress along these lines of putting away "the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit"—those who are seeking to **perfect** holiness in their hearts, and so far as possible also in their earthly bodies.—2 Cor. 7:1.

The context proves our assertion, for after speaking of prayer and thanksgiving to God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeping their hearts and minds, the Apostle sums up this advanced position of grace with the words of our text as the finality or finish of the argument, and of the process of character-development: "Finally, brethren."

"Whatsoever Things Are True"

This is the **first** question to be asked respecting any matter: Is it true or is it false? **If it is false the Lord's people are to have nothing whatever to do with it,—no matter how beautiful.** Love for the truth lies at the very foundation of saintship, and we remember that the Lord declares through the Apostle that those who will be rejected and stumbled at this time are such as "receive not the truth in the love of it" (2 Thes. 2:10)—such as have pleasure in unrighteousness (untruth). With our poor and at very best imperfect brains there is great danger of our being misled, and hence the Word of the Lord appeals to us with force that we should not even **touch** that which we realize is untrue. This does not mean that we may not weigh and balance evidences to discern the truth from the untruth; but it does mean that as soon as the truth is discovered it will be embraced and acknowledged, and the untruth as vigorously disavowed and completely withdrawn from. To tamper with error after we see it to be error, to "see how it would reason out, anyway," when we know the matter is on a wrong basis, is to lay a trap for our spiritual feet, one which frequently stumbles travelers on the way to Zion.

If we are following God's admonition through the Apostle, in this text, it will mean an avoidance of fiction, of novels, of unrealities. This, on the other hand, will mean an increased reverence for whatsoever things are true, an increased devotion to them, an increase of time for their study, and an increase of the spirit of truth in our hearts as a result.

"Whatsoever Things are Honest"

The truth of the thing is only one of the tests to which it must be put. We may find a matter to be true and yet not find it to be worthy of our thought, dishonorable. Who does not know that there are dishonorable and dishonoring thoughts, the pondering of which not only wastes valuable time, but instead of bringing a reward, a blessing for the time spent upon them, entails a loss, a disadvantage, in that it leaves a dishonorable stain in our minds, unworthy of us as new creatures in Christ Jesus?

The true but dishonorable or unworthy things presenting themselves for our consideration at the bar of our minds are perhaps oftenest in connection —with others—the weaknesses, the errors, the follies, or what not of our neighbors, of our friends. The entertaining of these thoughts, the pondering of them, will be unfavorable to us, and the sooner we discern the matter and dismiss them the better, the happier, the more noble will be our own hearts.

The dismission of these unworthy thoughts will leave us the opportunity and the energy, if we will, to expend that much more time upon whatsoever things are not only true but also honorable, worthy of our attention as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

"Whatsoever Things Are Just"

Here we have another limitation. Our minds are to be occupied in thinking about righteousness or just things, principles, etc., we are not to be continually meditating upon grievances and injustices, either real or imagined. We are to remember, on the contrary, that we are living in the period which the Scriptures denominate "the present evil world," and that it could not be this if Justice prevailed generally. We are to remember that hereunto we were called,—even to endure injustice, for righteousness' sake;—to do good, to lay down our lives in the service of the Lord and his Word, and yet to be evil-spoken of and to be misunderstood and to have all manner of evil said against us falsely for Christ's sake. We are, therefore, not to think strange of the fiery trials that shall surely come upon all who are of the Royal Priesthood; but rather, having settled this matter in advance, when we made our consecration, we are to take it as it comes, as a matter of course, not grieving over nor specially thinking about the trials, the injustices, etc. And thus doing we will have the more time to give to thinking of the more helpful, the more strengthening, the more elevating things—the things that are just, the things that are in harmony with righteousness, respecting the past, the present and the future, as promised in the Lord's word.

"Whatsoever Things Are Pure"

There is a vast amount of impurity everywhere throughout the world. It, therefore, behooves the Lord's consecrated people to follow the Apostle's injunction, and to carefully strain out the impurities, and see that they do not enter into our hearts, our thoughts, realizing that with them in the result will be to work our defilement, to a greater or less degree. Whoever maintains purity of thought will have comparatively little effort in maintaining purity of word and of action. Whether the impurity come from one direction or another—from the world or the flesh or the devil—its attack must first of all be upon the mind; and if repelled there the victory is won: if not repelled we cannot know what the consequences would be, as the Apostle James declares: "Lust [selfish desire of any kind], when it has conceived [in the mind] bringeth forth sin [develops sinful words or deeds], and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."—Jas. 1:15.

No wonder, then, that the Apostle mentions the necessity for our thoughts being guarded along the line of purity, and that if a matter were ever so well established as a truth, and if it involved no injustice, and even were not dishonorable, yet were impure, this would be quite sufficient to condemn it as unworthy of the mind of the Lord's consecrated people. Nor is it to be overlooked that any smut or impurity entering into the mind may cause such a defilement as will give trouble in its complete eradication, not only at the time, but for years afterward.

"Whatsoever Things Are Lovely"

The saints are exhorted to be meek and peacemakers, but in order to be thus they must have amiable thoughts, lovely and lovable thoughts, kind thoughts, gentle thoughts. These in turn will gradually develop into graces of character. We are not to think upon subjects gendering anger, hatred, strife,—vexatious thoughts, quarrelsome thoughts, vindictive and contentious thoughts. These all are to be shunned as enemies to the new creature, and instead we are to think of the beautiful things, the amiable things, we may know respecting our neighbors, our friends; even though we be not able to fully close our eyes against their injustices or evil deeds, we may at least refuse to waste valuable time in thinking about their weaknesses and thus cultivating unamiable, quarrelsome dispositions in ourselves.

"Whatsoever Things Are of Good Report"

It may be argued by some that since the world hateth the light and the children of the light, and rejoiceth in iniquity and in getting the advantage over others, therefore those things which would be reputable with it would not be the holy things suitable to the thoughts of God's people. But not so, we answer; the world does recognize to a considerable extent a right standard, even though it does not follow that standard, nor even pretend to do so—even though it hates those who it sees are endeavoring to walk up to that standard; even though it calls the children of light hypocrites, and crucifies them, as in the case of our Lord. It is policy and false religion that generally excite religious persecution. Nevertheless, if anyone will follow the standard that is reputable, and think upon those things he will find therein a blessing.

For the Victors Are the Rewards

Some may feel that if they thus sifted and tested and rejected all the untrue, the unworthy, the unjust, the impure and the unamiable thoughts presenting themselves, that they would have no topic left whereon to engage their minds, and this we believe would be true with a great many—their minds for a time would be quite vacant of thoughts, if all the evil and improper ones were rejected, banished; but by the time they would be in this attitude they would have such a "hunger and thirst after righteousness," truth, things lovely, things pure, things noble, that they would be in the right condition to receive the very spiritual food which the Lord has provided for them. There is one thing, and **one thing only,** which fully combines all of the above propositions, and demonstrates itself to be the one thing true, honorable, just, pure, lovely,—and that is, **the divine character and plan.** Let us think upon its various features. Let us study the divine Word and behold through it, as a telescope, the beauty of the divine character, the splendor of the divine plan, as revealed in God's Word and plan . . . whose length and breadth and height and depth no man can measure, and only the saints can comprehend by the holy spirit, and that in proportion as they receive of the holy spirit, the holy mind, the holy thoughts, replacing and displacing the unholy thoughts and sentiments of the natural man. (Eph. 3:18.) What a splendid premium the Lord thus places upon the study of his Word in the esteem of all who are of the class addressed by the Apostle in our text!

Such a ruling of the mind is a conquest; such a self-mastery is a victory; the greatest victory that can be gained. As the Scriptures declare, "He that ruleth his spirit [mind] is better than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) And the prescription given by the Apostle in our text, for the mental health of the saints, is the very soul-discipline necessary to our development in character, to the degree pleasing to God and acceptable, through Christ Jesus our Lord. These are the victors to whom will be granted a share in the Kingdom. Ah, then, as the Apostle exhorts, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author of our faith" until he shall have become the finisher of it (Heb. 12:1, 2): remembering that he who is on our part, and who has engaged to help us and to carry us through every difficulty, and to fully instruct us if we submit ourselves to him, and thus to "make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," is Jesus,—who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood.

Well do the Scriptures generally enforce the importance of guarding the mind, the will, the heart, saying, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Keeping it, to the saints now called, means life more abundant, with glory, honor and immortality. Neglecting it, refusing to exercise self-control, means the permission of selfish desires to be conceived in our brains, and to lead away from the Lord and his "narrow way" on toward sin, on toward the wages of sin—death—Second Death.—Z. '01:323-326.

The Faithful Approved and Tested

Golden Text:—"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee: and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.—Isa. 43:2.

REVIEWING the lessons of the past we find that they indicate that God was seeking for and approving and encouraging and testing those of his people who exercised special faith in him—to the extent of obedience, to the extent of their ability. Nor should this surprise us: what other quality could God seek in any member of the fallen race? Surely he could not seek for perfection, for his own Word declares explicitly that "There is none righteous, no not one." (Rom. 3:10.) As he sought not the perfect in mind or morals or features, we ask ourselves what quality would especially commend any member of the race to the Lord, and our answer is, that "God seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth"—in honesty, in sincerity. Such worship would be impossible except as it had a basis of faith: as it is written, "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him"; and again, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6.) True, the Apostle writes that love is the principal thing, but the Apostle is writing to those who already have been approved in their faith. In another sense of the word faith is the principal thing, because it is the basis and only condition upon which any other of God's favors are now obtainable.

Abraham—what did he do? What great exploits? How is it written? "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3.) According to this, faith will hide a multitude of defects? Indeed, according to the Word, it is only by the exercise of faith in our Redeemer that we are reckoned as covered with the robe of righteousness, and made acceptable to the Father, and permitted to stand complete in him.

What was there in Isaac's experiences in life to mark him as one of the Lord's. Isaac did nothing great, nothing wonderful. He founded no colleges, he built no churches, he organized no great relief funds, etc., etc., praiseworthy as those things may be; but he had the approval of God because he also believed God.

What wonderful things did Jacob do to give him a place of such prominence in the history of God's people, and to make him worthy to be the father of the nation of Israel? There is no record of any very wonderful works on the part of Jacob, aside from the fact that he had a wonderful faith in God. He believed in the Oath bound Covenant made to his grandfather Abraham—it saturated and filled his entire life. Everything in his entire course from first to last was shaped in accordance with that faith. God counted his faith to him also for righteousness, and his name has come down to us amongst others who had the grand testimony that they pleased God and are ultimately to have a share in the great work of God as a reward.

Joseph, the Faithful

Joseph accomplished more than his forebears as respects great and useful work in the world: in the line of God's providences he not only saved the nation of Israel, his father's house, but also the nation of Egypt from the famine which otherwise might have destroyed them all. But Joseph is not brought specially to our attention in the Scriptures because of this great deed. Rather the Scriptures lay as much emphasis upon some of the smaller transactions of his life, and recite all of his affairs as evidences of his faith in God. Without that faith Joseph would not have been anything. It was his faith that kept him in good courage and of restful heart even in the midst of trying circumstances and conditions; it was his faith and loyalty to the one in whom he believed that kept him from the hour of temptation while a member of Potiphar's household; it was his faith that triumphed in the prison and gave him opportunities for comforting and assisting others, and learning himself to sympathize with those in distress. It was his faith which prompted him to have that relationship with God which brought to him the interpretation of dreams and the exaltation to power and influence. It was his faith still that enabled him to use those opportunities without losing his head, that showed him to have the spirit of a sound mind.

Moses, the Meekest Man

Moses, perhaps more than all the characters of this lesson, was a mighty man both in word and deed; but while his greatness as a leader and a lawgiver shines out and marks him as a wonderful character, his faith is the most remarkable feature of his history. Not that in his case or in any of these cases the matter of faith is specially paraded and held up to our admiration—rather it is told in that simple manner which carries with it powerful conviction. We see the faith in its operation without being told about it. Moses without the Lord would have been nothing; Moses with the Lord, without faith, would have accomplished nothing, for God would not have used him, but would have found another instrument for his service. It was the combination—God, Moses, Moses' faith and obedience—that prompted the grand exhibit which we find in his life, and constituted him in the eyes of the whole world one of the most gigantic figures of history. So great was Moses that he could in simplicity and without bombast write, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up of your brethren like unto me"—in reference to the great Messiah, King of kings and Lord of lords.

These things being true teach us that the most important thing for us, that we may have the divine favor and approval and blessing, is first of all that we have implicit faith in God. And this faith we find both from the Scriptures and from experience is a matter of growth. Our faith should grow stronger with every day that we live, so that our closing days in life would be the fullest of trust. But here we must note a danger and difficulty amongst those who seek to cultivate faith: the Adversary would present faith in man and in the words of man and in the theories of man as instead of faith in God and his Word.

How many have been hindered, turned aside from the right path, by a misplaced faith! How many today are worshiping the creeds and theories of men and neglecting the Word of the Lord! How necessary to us that, while recognizing the fact that God has always used mouthpieces and leaders amongst his people, we should also recognize the fact that Satan has **many** mouthpieces and provides **many** leaders, and that our method of discrimination as between the true and the false prophets must be by their faithfulness to the Word of God, as it is written—"If they speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20.) Let us then not only resolve to cultivate faith, but that we make sure that it will have foundation in the Word of the Lord. And to thus make sure will imply such a love for truth, such an appreciation of the divine Word, as will lead us to spend time and energy, money, everything, that we may know the truth and be made free by it. Whoever, therefore, loves money, praise of men, honors of men, etc., more than he loves God or his Word, is not likely to obtain or to hold the proper knowledge of God, upon which alone the proper faith and obedience can be built.

In the School of Discipline

It was not sufficient that Abraham had faith to begin with, so that he was ready to follow the invitation of the Lord to leave his own country for another upon which as yet he had no claim except the divine promise. It was because Abraham had such a faith and was able to exercise it that God counted him worthy to receive promises at all. Then came the test as to how strongly he would hold to the promises—for instance, the test respecting his son, whose birth was the very center of all the divine promises. Twenty-five years did God test the faith of Abraham on this point until he was growing old, and Isaac was born when he was a hundred years old. Notice again how God kept Abraham in the school of discipline, testing his faith; not testing it with a view to breaking it and destroying it, but on the contrary applying the tests so as to increase the faith, to make it stronger and every way better. Note, for instance, that Isaac was allowed to grow up to be a young man, and Abraham to pass the time of life when he might hope to have another son, when God commanded the slaying of Isaac as a sacrifice. How grand was the faith that never faltered, that still believed that in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed! What evidence we have here that Abraham was well taught and had learned well the various lessons under the divine instruction! He was able to offer up his son, and counted that God was able to raise him from the dead and thus to fulfil the promise—never doubting. O, what a grand summit of faith was thus evidenced! How such a character must have pleased God! and it shines out the more because of the darkness and idolatry of his time.

Consider how Isaac and Jacob were also schooled in advance, and learned well the lesson of confidence in God and his Oath-bound Covenant. See the same in the case of Joseph, whose life was full of adversity and was grandly rounded out by these trying experiences, his faith becoming stronger, apparently, at every step of the journey of life. Note the same in Moses' case from first to last. He who was so humble minded respecting his own talents that he insisted he was quite unfit to be the leader of the people, after being assured that God would lead him and use him as his representative and channel merely—then Moses was willing and ready and able to do all things through his faith in the Almighty God. The lesson clearly is that the trials and difficulties, tests and disciplines of faith were specially provided of the Lord for the development of the character of the ancient worthies chiefly along the lines of faith; that they not only had faith prominent to begin with, but that God saw to it that this characteristic was more and more a pronounced one in them.

The Trial of Your Faith

We are glad to have the testimony of the Apostle that these grand characters of the past met with the divine approval, and fell asleep in death to await at the resurrection a grand reward—their trial and testing having been successfully finished. But in the same connection the Apostle tells us that in the divine plan the "little flock" of the Gospel age has been called to a still higher station and privilege and blessing than the ancient worthies. The Apostle's words are, "These died in faith, not having received the thing promised: God having provided some better thing for us [the Gospel Church], that they without us should not be made perfect." Their perfection will be to the human nature: ours, if we are of the very elect, will be to the divine nature, far above angels, principalities and powers.

What then shall we suppose respecting God's approval in the Gospel Church, and the tests that he will apply? Can we think that he would make faith a test in the past and ignore it as respects the present election? Nay, verily! Faith is still the test of all who would please God. So then, as God in the past selected for the channels of his promises and blessings only those who could exercise faith, we may expect that in the present time the Lord has nothing whatever to offer except to those who can exercise faith in him and in his promises. We know that this must of necessity signify that the called of the Gospel age would be a very much smaller number than the whole population of the world; and then again we have the further declaration that of the called few will be chosen. What does this signify except that few will prove themselves to have the requisite faith and obedience to please God, to be counted worthy a share in the Kingdom with his dear Son, our Lord.

And if only those who have faith have been called throughout this Gospel age, what shall we say of the testings of faith for these? The Apostle's intimation is that their faith will need a great testing. He says, "The trial of your faith is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth." (1 Pet. 1:7.) Gold has a special value at the present time by reason of its scarcity—a value that will perish when with the new order of things it will be as easy to have gold as to have clay or iron: but the "little flock," is always to be specially precious in that to this class alone of humanity, so far as the divine revelation shows, will be granted the divine nature, with its glory, honor and immortality. Hence the trial of the faith of this class is very precious, a very important matter. None shall be admitted to that glorious immortality without first being tested and proven by the Lord. But here again let us remember that our testing is not as respects the flesh, to see whether or not we are perfect in the flesh, but on the contrary we are assured that God knoweth our condition—that all things are open and naked before his sight, and that he declares that we are all imperfect.

What then is God seeking in us? The development and perfection of faith! The first element in it is to believe in him as a faithful, wise, true God; and secondly to believe in his revelation of Jesus as his Son, and the one through whom he has provided a covering for our imperfections, our blemishes, past, present and future. This is the essential phase which must be held on to, and which he will therefore test in order to prove our loyalty. This is the faith that must grow stronger as the days and months roll by. This is the faith through which will be reckoned to us the merit of Christ's atonement, and through which we will have reconciliation. This is the faith that must be proven to have such tenacity and strength that it will trust the Lord even where it cannot trace him, as did Abraham when he believed that God was able and willing to fulfil his promise, even though it should imply the resurrection of Isaac from the dead. We must learn, **we must develop, at least that much faith also,** so that we will believe in God and the fulfilment of his promises even though the fulfilment of them signifies not only our own resurrection from the dead to glory, honor and immortality, but signifies also an awakening of all the families of the earth from the prison-house of the tomb, that they may have fulfilled toward them the gracious promise made to Abraham—"In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Without such faith in God and in his promises it will be impossible to please him and to become of the elect class which he is now selecting.

"If God Be For Us"

Nor are we to worry ourselves to make tests for our own faith—rather we are to leave the matter in our Lord's hands. The tests will probably not come to us along the lines of our expectancy, but, on the contrary, from unexpected quarters. That many such tests are before us in the "evil day" in which we are living, the Apostle assures us. He tells us that we will require the whole armor of God in order to be able to withstand the assaults upon our faith in this time. So subtle will be these assaults that our Redeemer tells us that if it were possible the "very elect" would be deceived. But, thank God, it is not possible for these to be deceived. The Lord has become their refuge and their habitation; he has accepted the supervision of their affairs; he will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape. (1 Cor. 10:13.) While we are not to think it strange concerning these fiery trials, our faith in the Lord's testimony respecting them will have much to do with our preparation for withstanding them. . . .

"Faith Can Firmly Trust Him, Come What May"

Our Golden Text is a very encouraging one. In view of the fact that all of the called, chosen and faithful must be required to pass through the school of experience, discipline and testing with a view to their final approval, how encouraging it is to know that the Lord will indeed be with us in every trouble, that he sympathizes with us in all of our trials, adversities, afflictions, perplexities, etc., and that "behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face." The waters of affliction, disappointment, perplexity, trouble, will be about us, and we are not to float with the current either, but are to endure hardness as good soldiers. But our source of strength in battling with the current of life is never to be forgotten—**"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee."** Blessed thought! "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," and he assures us, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." (Phil. 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:9.) Our Golden Text implies rivers of trouble, but assures us that when we pass through the rivers they shall not overflow us, they shall not extinguish us; on the contrary the Lord will pull us safely over to the other side, where we shall have life, and that more abundantly, with the glory, honor and immortality which he will provide for his Bride—his Elect.—Z. '07:168-171.

To Serve, Not To Be Served

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—Matthew 20:28.

THE Master was impressing upon His hearers the difference between Himself and other great kings. He had come to be King of Israel, in fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. Unlike earthly rulers He was not seeking to learn how much He could get out of the people, but how much He could do for the people. He was not selfish. He was not trying to see how little He could serve and how much others could serve Him; but on the contrary, how little others might do for Him and how much He could do for others. And this is His expectation in respect to His followers. He and His disciples, called with a Heavenly Calling, called to a Heavenly Kingdom, are not called to be selfish or to appropriate honors to themselves for their own gratification; but they are called to service—especially to the service of the people of God. This is the true meaning of the word **minister**; namely, one who serves.

It is especially appropriate that all who are followers of the Lord Jesus should remember that we have each been called to service; and that those who are ministering in spiritual things, those who are especially known by the name of "minister," should bear in mind that theirs is an office which calls for service, not to themselves, but to others; and that they have consecrated their lives thus to serve. Our Lord entered upon His ministry at His consecration. Of His life previous to His baptism at Jordan, the Scriptures say very little, so that the more attention may be attracted to His three and a half years of ministry in the Truth, when He was laying down His life for others—for His friends and also for His foes.

The same is true of all His followers. Our ministry begins at the time of our consecration. We are not authorized to minister, or serve, in holy things until we have entered upon the way which the Lord has pointed out to us. . . .

Only a Son of Man Could Serve as Ransomer of Man

Our Lord speaks of Himself as the Son of Man, who came to "minister, and to give His life a Ransom for many." He was indeed the Son of God, even while He was the Son of Man. The perfect man Adam, before his fall into sin, was a son of God. Our Lord in calling Himself the Son of Man was emphasizing the fact that He was no longer on the spirit plane, but on the human plane. He came to earth for a specific purpose—as He explained, to minister, to serve. He could not have done the necessary service for man as a spirit being. The requirement was that He should become a man in order to ransom mankind. He could ransom **man** only by becoming **man**. He could purchase life for the **perfect Adam** and the race who lost life in him only by becoming a **perfect** man.

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man's life for a man's life," was the demand of the Divine Law. Adam had sinned, and must be redeemed before he could be restored, either physically, mentally, or morally, or could be returned to God's favor. Jesus had come to make possible this full restoration. His life was devoted to the service of others, and He completed this great service in His death on the cross. Throughout His earthly sojourn He gave us a noble example of the proper life of those who would be followers in His footsteps.

Our Service Particularly for the New Creation

Many misunderstand the Bible and think that now is the time to save the world. Hence they are spending all their time and energies to comfort and uplift humanity. They are indeed engaged in laudable efforts; for every good work or effort is to be commended. But to those who are rightly informed respecting the Divine Plan there is another, a far higher work, to be done now. The work of God in the present Age has not been the reformation of the world, but the development of the New Creation. If we would work the work of God, our works must relate to the New Creation preeminently. We may do good unto all men as we have opportunity, as the Apostle says, but especially are we to serve the Household of Faith.

Jesus was in line for this work of ministry. Although there were no New Creatures as yet, while He was here in the flesh, His work was to prepare for these New Creatures. His work was the gathering out of some who would be faithful footstep followers of Himself, and the laying down of His life on their behalf and on behalf of the whole world.

In the context we note the fact that two of Jesus' disciples were especially desirous at this time of sitting upon the Throne with the Master in His Kingdom, one upon His right and the other upon His left. Jesus did not condemn them for this desire, but pointed out to them how difficult were the conditions, and asked them whether they were able to comply with these conditions. They replied, "We are able." They were willing, at least. That their answer was pleasing to Jesus was manifested by His words, "Ye shall indeed drink of My cup, and be baptized with My baptism." They asked for places in the Kingdom very near to Him. Jesus informed them that He was not Himself able to give them such places—that the places would not be given according to favor, but according to justice; and that the Father would dispense these.

Are We Meeting the Necessary Conditions?

The place that we occupy in the Kingdom will depend much upon the extent to which we become ministers, or servants. And if we simply try to get as much as possible out of others and to give as little as possible, we shall not be such characters as the Lord is seeking for rulership in the Kingdom; in fact, we would not gain the Kingdom at all. He is seeking a very choice class. This class will all be servants, willing and glad to serve, esteeming it a great privilege to lay down their lives in the service of the brethren, to the extent of their ability and opportunity; for the service of the brethren is the service of God, to whom they have rendered themselves in consecration, to whom they have professed to devote their lives.—Z. '15:312, 313.

"I Am With You Alway"

Golden Text.—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"—Matt. 28:20.

WHILE we have gifts differing one from the other, and are, therefore, able to contribute to the Lord's cause relatively larger or smaller amounts of energy or service or wealth, the Lord in making his estimate will take knowledge of the spirit which actuated us, rather than of the results secured by our efforts; so that of some small talent it may be said, as it was said of the poor widow who cast in the two mites into the Lord's treasury,—that the smaller gift was more appreciated by the Lord than some of the larger ones. In view of this, let us see to it, not only that we do with our might what our hands find to do, but also that our every sacrifice and gift to the Lord and his cause is so full of love and devotion that the Lord will surely approve it; as done from love for him and his, and not from vainglory.

The Golden Text of this lesson contains a precious thought,—that the Lord has been with his representatives in all their labors of love and self-denial, throughout the entire age, noting their efforts, assisting, encouraging, sustaining them, and surely watering and refreshing all who are making his service their **special** object in life,—ministering his grace to others, watering and feeding them. And if this has been true in the past, all through the age, how specially true we may realize it to be now, . . . in the time of our Lord's second presence! How we may realize that he is with us, in sympathy, in co-operation, in assistance, in sustaining grace,—able and willing to make all of our experiences profitable to us, and to use us abundantly. . . .

Let these thoughts quicken us to fresh and greater energies, and to an appreciation of the fact that the things of this present time are but transitory (both its joys and its sorrows); and that the ambitions and hopes of the world are not worthy of comparison with these noble and laudable ambitions to serve and to please our Master, and to have his rewards—the chief of which will be fellowship with himself in glory, and the privilege of being colaborers with him in the blessing of the world,—the grand fulfilment of the heavenly Father's gracious plans for the world of mankind.—Z. '03:91.

The Model Prayer

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of."—Matthew 6:8.

THE prayer of God's people should not be for temporal things. We know of no Scriptural illustration where the spiritual sons of God asked definitely for temporal things and received an answer. We remember that St. Paul prayed three times very earnestly for the restoration of his eyesight. God would not give him the thing he asked for, but would give him that which would be better for him as a New Creature. And this affliction of poor eyesight, watery eyes, would help to keep him in remembrance of the fact that he was once a persecutor of the Lord's people. The Lord would not take away his affliction, but would give him the grace necessary. Presumably, when the Apostle learned that lesson, he did not pray for such things again; but doubtless it was to our benefit that he did not find this out until he had prayed those three improper prayers. We learn from this that we should be in the attitude to say, "Lord, Thou knowest what I have need of. Give what is best."

Some might declare that this would not be the proper way to offer a petition—that we should ask God for something definite; for instance, if one needed a coat, he should ask for a coat. But our Father has said that we need not go into particulars. God knows that we have need of bread. Our petition, therefore, when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread," is not that we think that God would forget about it, but rather as an acknowledgment on our part that all we have—our food and everything else—comes from God. He knows what we have need of, and provides these things aside from our asking. Nevertheless, it is the Father's good pleasure that we should go to Him, asking forgiveness for our sins, realizing that He has made provision in advance for that forgiveness, and that only as we are merciful to others will He deal mercifully with us in respect to our trespasses. With regard to our food, we thank our Father as the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

We hallow His name—honor His name—put it first in our petitions, in our thoughts. The idea is not as to how much glory we can get; but, first of all, we mention our Father and His glorious name—we hallow His name, make it holy. It should be hallowed and revered everywhere in the whole world. Then we follow with the petition desiring that His Kingdom would come; for we realize that His Kingdom is the very thing that the whole world needs, and that He has promised that it shall come. This is merely to tell Him of our dependence upon Him, and our waiting for Him and for those things which He has promised and arranged for in His Kingdom. We are not merely saying, "Thy Kingdom come"—we are waiting for it, expecting it. Then comes in the mention of our necessities. He knoweth what things we have need of—whether it be a full loaf, a half loaf or a quarter loaf, a small ration or a large one. Then we ask for protection from the Evil One.

There is no such request as, "My shoes are needing to be replaced with new shoes," or "My coat is getting glossy." The heathen, the world might pray for these things; but we are children of God, and are to conform our prayers to what He has said. We are to take for examples the prayers of Jesus and such prayers as the Apostles offered. These prayers are not so much requirements made of God, but telling Him we are depending upon Him, seeking to have no will of our own—merely sinking into His will, asking that His will be done in all our affairs. Then we are to live and act according to that will and according to those prayers.—Z. '15:40.

Self-Denial and Cross-Bearing Conditions

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me [be my follower], let him deny himself, and take up his cross."—Matt. 16:24.

WHAT is it for us to deny ourselves? It signifies that having consecrated ourselves to the Lord we should have no wills of our own; self should be ignored, or, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Self-denial, then, means to ignore self-will, self-gratification: and this includes all the earthly ambitions and desires, the sinful, and no less those that are laudable and proper. We pledge ourselves at the very beginning that we are not following our own inclinations and our own wills, but are to be wholly subject to the will of our Head, the Lord Jesus, if we may be in turn counted in as members in particular of his body, the elect Church.

Very graciously, the Lord vails from our sight at the beginning of the way some of the trials of the flesh and conflicts between the mind of the flesh and the new mind, which this full consecration must involve if we press along the line toward the mark which he has set for us, as the standard of character. Could we see all that is implied from the very beginning of the race we would be disheartened no doubt, but as we grow in grace, and become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, we grow also in knowledge and in love toward the Lord and toward all who are in fellowship with him, and thus it becomes daily easier for us, as we sing,

"... the pathway smooths,
Since first we learned to love it."

As a result, by and by the trials which came at first seem to be as nothing, but other trials come instead, as we discern more distinctly, more clearly, the good, the acceptable, the perfect will of God. Thus our trial condition progresses, and what is required of us is that step by step we shall be faithful to what we see to be the Lord's will, and shall seek to the best of our ability to submit ourselves thereto. This is self-denial,—forsaking all else to be Jesus' disciples.

Cross-bearing is closely related to self-denial, and yet a distinction between them may be noted. Self-denial relates more particularly to passive obedience and endurance for the Lord's sake; cross-bearing relates more particularly to activities in the Lord's service, which we find to be contrary to our natural inclinations. Faithfulness in self-denial means courage and zeal; cross-bearing means victory, overcoming. Our self-denials may be victories gained in our own hearts, of which others may know nothing, and of which they should know nothing, if we desire to have the fulness of the Lord's blessing, for we are to make sure that we do not deny ourselves to be seen of men, but merely for the Lord's approval. Our cross-bearings, however, may be seen, to some extent at least, by those who are in close contact with us, and especially by those who are walking in the same "narrow way."

And how appropriate it is that all cross-bearers should recognize each other, and be able to sympathize with one another, and give an encouraging word, a sympathizing look or a helping hand, as opportunity may offer. As for others, we cannot expect sympathy from them, for from their standpoint we are counted fools (Acts 26:24; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2:14; 3:18), unwise, following an unwise course, bringing our difficulties upon ourselves, because we insist on following an ideal Pattern, the pattern of our dear Redeemer, instead of following the pattern of churchianity and the world. Such, of course, have only sneers for the faithful, and often no doubt think of them as they speak of them, as being hypocrites. This indeed is a part of the cross-bearing, especially when those who deride and who sneer are those whom we love and whose esteem we would enjoy, if we could have it in conjunction with the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Look, for instance, at our Lord Jesus, and the cross which he bore—not the literal cross of wood which he bore to Calvary, amid shame and jeers, but the cross-bearing which he practiced continually throughout the three and a half years of his ministry from the time of his consecration at Jordan. Note how faithfulness to the truth, in testifying respecting his mission, the Kingdom that he was establishing, and the terms and conditions of membership in it, being misunderstood by the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees, led to opposition continually, so that they not only maligned his name, but in their hatred sought his life and finally obtained it. Note that these were not worldly people, as that word is generally understood, but members of the leading denominations of his day; and that the so-called holiness people of that day were his most bitter assailants. He could indeed have fallen into line with the Pharisees or with the Sadducees, and have been considered "respectable," and have had a large following, but fidelity to the truth would not permit him to do this, but forced him to take a stand independent of all sects and parties, and this brought against him the wrath of all of them, and was his continual and daily cross-bearing, that had to be borne, if he would "overcome" and be granted association with the Father in the Kingdom. And may not all of his faithful followers expect similar experiences, under similar conditions now? We think so; we know so; they have such experiences.

The Apostle mentions some of these crosses, and declares that the endurance of them are marks of his faithfulness as a servant of the Lord: "In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings," by dishonor, by evil report, as deceivers and yet true, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things. (2 Cor. 6:4-10.) How much our Master knew of being counted a deceiver, while yet he was the true one, of being called Beelzebub, while really the Prince of light! What a cross it must have been to endure such slanderous misrepresentations, and contradictions of sinners against himself; and how faithfully he bore the cross. And shall not all of his followers expect to similarly share this cross with him, and be misunderstood, misrepresented, misjudged, by those who are more or less blinded by the Adversary! Such dishonor, such evil reports, are amongst the things which our Lord specifically declared would be a part of our cross-bearing when he said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad (in all such cross-bearings), for great is your reward in heaven."

In a word, our Lord calls upon his disciples to follow him, in direct opposition to the world-current. He declares that the disciple must not expect to be above his Lord in being spared such experiences, but promises great rewards at the end of the journey—life eternal, with exceeding glory.

The awfulness of the teaching of the creeds of Christendom respecting the fate of the world in general is only grasped when we begin to seriously consider the narrowness of the way in which all of the Lord's true followers are called to walk in his footsteps. Surely, if all except such faithful saints, an **extremely** "little flock," are to be eternally tormented, it would mean that there are to be many members of every family on earth consigned to that awful and unending agony. How absurd is the proposition, how unreasonable, how unscriptural, when the Scriptures are rightly understood!

But how reasonable is the proper interpretation of our text, how reasonable its application to those who have been drawn of the Father to the Son, and who then have accepted of the Son and his great sacrifice for sin, and who have considered it a reasonable service to present their bodies living sacrifices, and have consecrated their all to him, that they might have fellowship in his sufferings, and ultimate fellowship also in his glory. These can see readily that the Kingdom honor and glory to which they are called, are blessings so great, honors so profound, and their works as kings and priests and judges in the Millennial age so particular, that all of these testings of faith, patience, love and obedience are wholly reasonable to them.

All such we exhort, that they catch not merely at the outward form of self-denial, practiced by nominal Christendom during the Lenten season, but that whatever of outward self-denial they may practice they may learn the full meaning of self-consecration and immolation which our Lord's words signify; and that they be not content with the wearing of a cross as an ornament, but grasp fully and clearly the purport of the Master's words respecting the true cross-bearing, that in due time they may also attain to the crown-bearing promised as a reward to the faithful. Let us renew our covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, determined, in the words of the Apostle, that we will more zealously than ever—Lay aside every weight, and every besetting sin, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel, looking unto Jesus, in whose footsteps we seek to tread.—Heb. 12:1; Z. '00:118, 119.

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Some Christian writer has well said: "Wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated heart, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed. Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of His will; sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle; a yielding to the wishes of others (where there is no conflicting principle involved), and an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety: deliverance from care and fear—all these, and many other similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is "hid with Christ in God."—Z. '16:183.

The Importance of Daily Self-Scrutiny

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged: but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."—1 Corinthians 11:31, 32.

IN THESE words the Apostle seems to be saying that if we as Christians should properly criticize ourselves, examine ourselves, correct ourselves, the Lord would not find it necessary to take us in hand and give us judgments, or criticism. But if we fail to do this judging, or criticizing, of ourselves, then it will be necessary for the Lord to do it; for He has taken us into His family, He has made us sons, and we are in the School of His Son, our great Elder Brother, to be trained and instructed. This is our Judgment Day.

The object of this chastening on the part of the Lord is not to vent His displeasure upon us by causing us pain; but it is as the Apostle states, "that we may not be condemned with the world." We judge ourselves when we criticize our own conduct, our own words—our own thoughts, even—and try them by the principles laid down in the Word of God—justice, kindness, mercy, love. As our Master admonishes us, if we find that we have done wrong, we should leave our gift before the altar—we should first go and make apologies to the one whom we have injured or wounded by any word or act of unkindness or rudeness. Then we may come and offer our gift.

Such a course would be forcing one's self, obliging one's self to do the right thing. It is not enough that one should say, "I know that I was wrong; I should not have done as I did; but, then, I am imperfect; I cannot do just what is right in everything." This course would not be in harmony with the spirit of our text. Our text shows that if we do wrong we have a solemn duty to make it right, to the best of our ability. If we have had an uncharitable thought against another it is not necessary that we go to the person and tell him this; for we might make the matter worse by so doing. But we should judge ourselves in the matter and give ourselves a thorough setting down. We ought to give ourselves a good lesson, a lasting one. Thus we would be right in heart, in intention, approved of the Lord.

The Proper Course Toward Others

We understand that it is the Lord's will respecting us that we should carefully scrutinize our thoughts, words and actions. If we find that we have injured another with our tongue or in any manner, we should go to that person, and to any to whom we have spoken, and make it right, make proper apologies, putting a penalty upon ourselves —a penalty that we shall not forget. If the penalty requires considerable humility, so much the better. If we neglect to punish ourselves, this would show that we are not in the proper condition; and the best thing the Lord could do for us would be to give us a severe chastisement. This might not come in the same day or week or month. But we may be sure that if we do not do right in the matter, we shall come to the place where the Lord will take us in hand. If He does so, He will give us some trying experiences. It may be that some one will do something unkind to us or say something evil about us, and the Lord may permit this. Or He may allow us to get into a position that would bring upon us some kind of punishment.

The world will be on judgment, or trial, in the next Age. If we were of the world our special judgment would come then, instead of now. We would be making marks upon our character that would require stripes in the next Dispensation. But so surely as we belong to the Church class, we must receive our judgments and punishments in the present Age. If we fail to give them to ourselves, our Master will give them to us.

There is another Scripture which says that we are to "judge nothing before the time." (1 Corinthians 4:5.) This does not refer to our judging ourselves. We cannot judge ourselves in the sense of passing sentence in our own case; but we should carefully watch our conduct, our words and our thoughts, and deal with ourselves in regard to our own derelictions and our offenses against others. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." This means that we are to notice this fruitage of life which we see both in our own case and also in that of others—in our brethren, in our neighbors. In our own minds we are to judge and disapprove of evil actions and words. We should say, Is this right or is it wrong? We should be judging such matters all the time.

Not Our Province to Pass Sentence

Every day we see a great many things in life that are displeasing to the Lord. We hear others use vile language or improper language. We see acts of cruelty or injustice. So we can be judging these things as we go through life and getting lessons out of them. This does not mean that we should judge the people who do these things and decide what punishment they should receive. We are neither authorized nor competent so to do. We are not to sit in judgment as to the condition of the heart, except along lines where the Word of God plainly states that we are to judge. Appearances are very often deceptive, and things are not always what they seem to be.

The Lord tells us that the time will come when we shall be appointed judges of the world, but that this time is not now, and we are not to anticipate our work of the future either in our minds or in our words. Nor should we repeat to others what we may see or hear that would lower another in their eyes, save in a case when to do so would be a matter of duty. If we were to form judgments of others and go around telling what we think of this one or that one, we would have a hard time of it and would do an immense amount of harm. Thus we would come under the just condemnation of the Lord and surely bring upon ourselves His rebuke.

While we appreciate the truth of the Lord's words that a good tree will bring forth good fruit, and while we can see many times that there is something wrong in the conduct of certain ones, yet we are not able to judge of what would be the proper punishment for such conduct. We may know that the daily fruitage of a life indicates the condition of the heart, but we are not to pass sentence upon any. The Lord will make this decision. In the Master's words, "By their fruits ye shall know them." He gives us the thought that it is only in regard to that of which we have positive knowledge that we should render a decision in our own minds. We can know that the fruitage of a certain life proves that such a one is out of harmony with God. Yet we would have no right even then to pass sentence in the case. We cannot know what may have led to that unfavorable condition.

"I Judge Not Mine Own Self"

In regard to judging in our own case, no one should be so well able as ourselves to know our heart. But St. Paul shows us that we should use a certain amount of leniency in judging even ourselves. He says, "Yea, I judge not mine own self; . . . but He that judgeth me is the Lord." This is not a contradiction of the words of our text, but his thought seems to be that when we come to realize how high is God's standard, we might be inclined to judge ourselves too severely, not taking into account that we were shapen in iniquity. We might better think somewhat along this line: I realize that I have failed again today to live fully up to what I had hoped. I feel condemned before the bar of my own judgment because of it. But I hope the Lord will be able to make some allowance for me in this matter. I trust He can make some excuse for me that I do not see for myself. I am not sure how much allowance should be made; I am not able to judge myself accurately.

We should then go to our Father in earnest prayer, telling Him of our sorrow that we have not succeeded better in glorifying His name. We should plead the merits of the blood of our dear Redeemer, promising the Lord that we will strive to do better, if possible, by His assisting grace.

There are some of the Lord's children who possess only a small amount of self-esteem and who therefore would be inclined to be too severe in their judgments of themselves, and hold themselves to the strictest account for every imperfection. Such should try to judge themselves justly. All judgment should be just, even when we ourselves are the culprits. Justice is the foundation of the Lord's Throne. We should never lose sight of the fact that we have the covering of the robe of our Savior's righteousness and the Mercy-Seat, to which we should go every day for cleansing from every defilement. But it is not only proper, but indeed a duty that we daily scrutinize ourselves, and see that we keep the body in subjection to our new mind. Thus doing, and thus applying daily, nightly, for the application of our Redeemer's merit to cover our unwitting mistakes and faults, we shall be kept in our Father's love and approval, and shall not need so much chastening from the Lord.

This daily taking stock of ourselves, the discernment of our gains and losses as New Creatures in Christ, and of how and where these came to us in our constant warfare with all our spiritual foes within and without, will surely prove profitable to each child of God who takes such account of himself in the fear of the Lord, desiring only to be pleasing to his Father in Heaven, to become all that God would have him to be—a saint indeed.—Z. '14: 247, 248.

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True greatness does not consist in what we possess, but in what we are.—Z. '94: 303.

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Judas was present at the Passover and was given a sop and went out from the others before the supper was ended, fully bent upon betraying the Master: and this he did. This incident may represent the fact that in the close of this age, and just before the bride is completed, the sop of truth will become so strong that it shall drive forth from the company and communion of the faithful all those who do not have a full and proper appreciation of the blood of Jesus, shed by the Lamb of God for the taking away of the sin of the world. It is not for anyone this side the vail to judge who may be of that class. It is sufficient that each one carefully examine himself or herself, saying, "Is it I?" Truly this is a time for careful self-examination, for seeing to it that we are pure in heart toward all.—Z. '18: 67.

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When we think of the great advantage every way which we of the present age possess, we are inclined to say, What manner of persons ought we to be in all holiness of living and God-likeness. We who have the focused rays of divine inspiration and revelation from the past 6,000 years shining upon us with almost burning brightness, how it should consume in us all the dross of selfishness, how it should purify us, how humble it should make us, how we should be even in our flesh polished, bright, luminous representatives of the glorious Head and members of the Christ!—Z. '05: 169.

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Prayer is a privilege. Jesus did not command His disciples to pray, nor did He even give them a form of prayer until they requested it. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." The Lord's people must feel their need of divine grace and help in order to appreciate the privilege of approaching the throne of heavenly grace. The trials and difficulties, the sorrows and temptations of life frequently impel God's children to prayer. It marks a better, a higher Christian development when they love to come to the throne of grace, not only in their sorrows, but also in their joys, to give thanks, to praise, to worship, to adore.—Z. '12: 149.

The salvation of the Church through the glorious "change" of the First Resurrection is nearing every day, we are sure, even though we do not know exactly how many days still remain before that glorious consummation.—Z. '14:134.

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Those who upbraid us for pouring out our heart-treasures upon the members of Christ, the Church, do so through ignorance, and if at times it has caused some discouragement to us, let us hearken to the words of the Master, declaring that such is a noble course that has his approval, and that it is proper as a prelude to the burial of the entire Church, the body;—that it will be appropriate that this shall be done to the Church rather than for the poor world, up to the time when the Church shall have finished the earthly pilgrimage;—up to the time when the sufferings of Christ having been fulfilled there shall be no longer opportunity to bless and refresh and comfort the body of Christ, respecting whom our Lord declares that what is done to them is done to him.—Matt. 25:40; Z. '00:378.

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If the experiences and sentiments of this "little flock" are beyond the ken of the natural man, his neighbors and friends, is it any wonder? Despised and rejected of men, they are nevertheless God's royal priesthood; "as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, they live"—a life more abundant. In all these things they have cause to rejoice, realizing that the path in which they tread has in it the footprints of him who redeemed them and became the leader and forerunner of this priesthood. The world knows us not, even as it knew him not.—Z. '00:365.

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It is not always that religious parents have religiously inclined children. Several instances of the kind are mentioned in the Scriptures. Personal experience teaches us also that the parent who is earnestly consecrated to the Lord and guided by His Word has generally a good influence upon those nearest to him and directly under his care. Such an influence should be hoped for, prayed for, sought for by every parent. But it cannot be obtained except by carefulness, circumspection of word and deed. These in subjection imply that the very thoughts of the heart are brought into captivity to the will of God in Christ. Nevertheless parents who have failed to discern the Truth and recognize its responsibilities until their children have outgrown parental instruction must not chide themselves unmercifully if their children do not respect them and their religious convictions. Rather they should remember that the Lord is thoroughly acquainted with the situation and will hold them accountable only for what they do or do not after they have come to know him and to an opportunity for understanding the instructions of his Word respecting their own lives and the training of their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Z. '09:156.

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If at any time we find that we have taken a wrong course which is irretrievable, we may expect it to bring the disappointments as the Lord foretold; but he may permit it to bring, as well, some blessings in the way of contrition of heart, and humility toward the Lord, and greater zeal, watchfulness and faithfulness for the future. Thus, even some of the blunders of life may become stepping-stones to higher planes of grace and truth.—Z. '03:217.

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To those who have the knowledge of God, of His Word, of His Plan, the present and the near future offer certainly the most wonderful opportunities of which we could conceive. Whoever loves the Lord will love the brethren. Whoever would serve the Lord will be intent upon serving the brethren; and the more their need, the better the opportunity; and the greater our zeal, the greater the results for others, and the greater the blessing for ourselves. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."—John 4:36; Z. '16:4.

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Some one has well said, "There is a pride that looks **up** with envy, as well as a pride that looks **down** with scorn." The Lord's followers are to remember that pride in any person, in any station, respecting any matter, is highly reprehensible in God's sight and displeasing to Him. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but showeth His favor to the humble." Hence, all who would abide in the Lord's love have need to be very careful along this line—to keep very humble, very lowly in conduct, and particularly in mind.—James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Z. '17:123.

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Jesus has promised that all who continue faithful unto death shall receive the Crown of Life, this means life on **the very highest plane**—the Divine nature, like unto our glorious Lord and Master. St. Paul points out that there will be different degrees of glory even in the Kingdom—"as star differeth from star in glory." (1 Corinthians 15:41.) The Master in The Parable of the Pounds holds forth the same thought. (Luke 19:17-19.) The degree of faithfulness will mark the degree of shining forth in the Kingdom. "According to your faith be it unto you."—Z. '17:182.

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It is not enough that we keep the commandments, but that we keep them lovingly and loyally, of good pleasure, that we do not consider them grievous but rather are to be glad to be in line, in harmony, with all the Lord's righteous provisions and arrangements.—Z. '05:125.

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The eyes of the Lord are upon all His people and upon all their interests, to note their tears and their joys, their trials and difficulties and their prosperity, to care for all their interests.—Z. '05:318.

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"The cup which the Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?"

We must not lose sight of the fact that our dear Redeemer is our pattern and that we are to walk in His steps. The lesson to us, is full submission to divine providence in respect to all of our affairs—those which we see clearly and understand those also which are obscure to us, some of which at times may seem unnecessary. Our faith must triumph; our Father is too wise to err, He loves us too much to cause a needless tear, a needless pang. But if He permitted severe afflictions to come upon His Son, His well beloved and only one, that He might be tested and proven in respect to His loyalty to the last degree, shall we wonder that in calling us to be associates of that Son in glory, he should require of us also that we should learn obedience by the things we suffer? Gladly then, says the Apostle, will we suffer; gladly will we take this as an evidence that we are in the hands of the Lord and that he is shaping and fashioning us according to the glorious pattern, that we may ultimately be participants also of the heavenly glories and joys and immortality promised to his faithful.—Z. '05:206.

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We are waiting, with patience for the glorious day of Immanuel's reign, the reign of righteousness, when justice shall be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet. In the meantime we are to brave the oppositions of the world as did Daniel; as did Christ, as did the apostles, faithfully, courageously, persistently—even unto death. The principle which we recognize has been recognized also amongst worldly people, as Shakespeare says:—

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
  Thou shalt not escape calumny."
"That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect;
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
So thou be good slander doth yet approve
Thy worth the greater." —Z. '05:300.

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Some one has said, "Covetousness is like drinking the salt waters of the sea, which only increase the thirst; or like piling wood on the fire, which only makes it burn the fiercer; or like climbing higher, which only enlarges the horizon of the desires." The only covetousness encouraged by the spirit of righteousness and the word of the Lord is that mentioned by the Apostle. "Covet earnestly the best gifts"—the gifts of divine grace, which neither rob others, nor make God the poorer.—Z. '98:221.

◆

To a considerable degree it is for us to determine what nourishment we will have. The Lord supplies the good soil of Truth, the refreshing showers of grace, and the nourishment of precious promises, but it is for each of his people to use these. We cannot, then, blame the Husbandman if we come short, and be unfruitful from lack of nourishment. None of his good promises can fail; whatever failing there may be must be in ourselves.—Z. '06:93.

◆

"Of all the beautiful lessons
  With which God's book is filled,
This one, of wonderful sweetness
  Hath most my being thrilled.
Oh! wonderful care of the Father!
  Oh, wonderful love so free!
To know that the Maker of all things
  Careth so much for me."—Z. '05:221.

◆

What every home needs is not only a visit from Jesus, but that it should be his home, his abiding place. It would be a safe rule of life for all of the Lord's followers to desire to go to any place they would have reason to believe the Lord would go if he were again present in the flesh; it would be a safe rule for us to do or say such things as we would have reason to expect that our Lord would do or say were he present in our stead. Blessings, we may be sure, went with the dear Master whereever he went, specially to those who like Nathanael were Israelites indeed, in whose hearts there was no guile.—Z. '05:11.

◆

Not only should Spiritual Israelites rejoice to have the privilege of one day in seven for a special rest from physical labor and for special engagement in spiritual works, pleasures and refreshments, but additionally they should realize that the world is watching them, and that their influence for good would be greatly interfered with by their violation of this civil law, which the world supposes to be backed by divine command. Our advice, therefore, to all true Spiritual Israelites is that they be as strict or more strict in their observance of Sunday as a Sabbath of rest than are their neighbors—that all works except those of necessity or mercy be avoided, that this precious day be considered a boon from the Lord, a great privilege and opportunity for growth in grace and knowledge and love. Let our homes be the most quiet of all in civilized lands on the appointed day of rest, let no sounds of labor or of worldly pleasure be heard in our habitations, but let our joys of hope and love and faith abound, and let our happy hearts manifest themselves in cheerful words and tones and looks, that thus our moderation as well as our joy in the Lord may be manifest to all with whom we have to do, that they may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of him.—Z. '06:107.

◆

To love the Lord with all our heart would mean that the sum of all our affections would center upon the Lord, so that our love for him would far excel all of our love for the dear ones of the home and the family and of the whole world. To love the Lord with all our soul would signify with all our being—to manifest our love not only by our words and looks, by our praises, but by our services and all of our conduct in life, everything testifying that God is first in our affections and in all of life's interests. Thirdly, to love him with all our strength would signify that time and talent and influence would all be at the service of our God, that in everything we would be ready to be used, spent, in glorifying his name in serving his cause as we might understand it to be his will. Fourth, to love our Lord with all our mind would seem to imply that we are to intellectually attempt to appreciate the Lord, to understand his divine laws and to enter into heart sympathy with them, so that our service and worship would be the more intelligent, after the kind described by our Lord when he said, "They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"—intelligently.—Z. '06:201.

◆

Only those wise toward God and seeking to live in harmony with his will may be expected to have clear discernment of the true plan of God; all others will be confused and in more or less of darkness. —Z. '06:59.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY-FIVE

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"Ye Have Not, Because Ye Ask Not"

James 4: 2.

THE trouble with many is that they do not avail themselves of the great stock of divine grace set apart for the benefit of those who, abiding in Christ, and his word abiding in them, do ask, do seek and do find. Let no one suppose that all prayer must be selfish. Quite to the contrary, we have a wide field of prayer-liberty in full accord with the Lord's Word and will.

Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer for the promised succor. Every failure to gain victory is an occasion for a prayer for forgiveness, and as well for divine blessing, that the lesson of our own weakness may be deeply impressed, so that in the next similar trial we may promptly apply for and lay hold upon the "grace to help" promised. Every victory over self is an occasion for prayer that we be not high minded and puffed up, but kept humble and watchful for the next attack from the great Adversary. Every service for the truth becomes an occasion for a prayer of thanks for the privilege of serving the Great King and mayhap to have suffered something for his cause; and a cause for supplication for further opportunities of service and grace to use them wisely.

If you have trials and temptations which you are able to overcome, and which are working out in your character patience, experience, brotherly-kindness, sympathy and love, rejoice and offer the prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledgment of divine mercy and help. If your trials seem heavier than you can bear, and likely to crush you, take the matter to the great Burden-bearer, and ask his help in bearing whatever would do you good, and release from all that would not do you good, but which would injure you. If your heart is full of a desire to obey the Lord's injunction and "forget not the assembling," and you are unreasonably hindered in a way that you have tried to overcome but cannot, take the matter to the Lord in prayer, and watch and wait and strive according to your prayer, and you will soon see a manifestation of divine power on your behalf. If you see a true brother, a true "soldier" faltering and in danger, let your heart be so full of love for all of the Lord's "brethren" that you will not only run to his relief, but also supplicate the throne of the heavenly grace unceasingly, until you have regained him, or until in his wilfulness he has renounced the "narrow way" entirely.—Z. '96:163.

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord": He is able to rejoice in tribulation, in sickness, in poverty—in every condition he is blessed, and may be joyous in realizing that the light afflictions of the present time are working out a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory to those who are rightly exercised by them.—Z. '98: 332.

◆

The sons of God are not merely anxious for a meeting, in which the world, the flesh and the devil will commingle—they are anxious specially for fellowship with each other, with those who have similar characters, similar faith in the precious blood, and similar consecration. . . . This desire for fellowship with one another is not selfishness, nor an impropriety.—Z. '98: 367.

◆

With all our striving and watchfulness, however, we shall not be able, in our present condition, to reach our ideal. Perfection is something which can only be approximated in the present life. But the measure of our effort to attain it will prove the measure of our faithfulness.—Z. '11:136.

◆

What wonderful privileges are ours at this day! Abiding in the Lord's love and favor, with loyalty of heart toward him, it is now our privilege of going up into the Mount of God and seeing wonderful things. Our visions are of a different kind. Before us are opened the glorious things of all the past—the divine revelations to Abraham and the prophets and through Jesus and the apostles—all of these things now are opened before us, radiant with harmonious beauty. Ours is a vision of Moses and the Lamb, and ours is a picture of Moses and the Lamb in the very highest and grandest sense.—Z. '06:183.

ANNOUNCEMENT

It has been suggested that some of the most helpful articles which appeared in the earlier numbers of OLD CORN GEMS be reprinted, so that all may have an opportunity of studying them. In this issue the beautiful article "The Peace of God," which appeared in OLD CORN GEMS No. 5, is reprinted. No doubt the majority, if not all, of the Ecclesias will make it the subject of special study.

◆

On Sunday, March 27th (the last day of the Victoria Convention), the home of Brother and Sister Edwards, with practically all of its contents, was completely destroyed by fire. It was feared at first that this would interfere with the OLD CORN GEMS, as the office was located in the house, and all the papers, Towers, etc., etc., were destroyed. However, on consideration it was found that such would not be the case—that it would still be possible to continue with the work of comfort as heretofore. The last session of the convention unanimously passed a resolution that the work be continued.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD: AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

The Peace of God

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4: 7.

PEACE is defined to be a state of quiet, or tranquility, freedom from disturbance or agitation—calmness, repose. Such a state of mind our text affirms of God. His is a mind tranquil, calm, undisturbed, never agitated, nor even wearied nor perplexed by any of the cares of His vast dominion. Yet this perfect peace of God, the Scriptures show, is due neither to the fact that there are no disorders in His vast domain, nor yet to any stoical indifference to pain or pleasure, but rather to that perfect poise of His glorious attributes which makes Him Master of His situation as Sovereign of the whole universe.

Have we admired the coolness and calm self-possession of a great general, such as Grant or Napoleon, in the midst of the confusion and smoke of battle? or of a great statesman, such as Gladstone or Bismarck, in the midst of national perplexities and perils? or of skilled physicians or others in critical times and places? These are only faint illustrations of the peace of self-possession and self-confidence which rules in the mind of God. He is never confused, bewildered, perplexed, anxious or care-worn, nor in the least fearful that His plans will miscarry or His purposes fail, because all power and wisdom inhere in Him.

The scope of His mighty intellect reaches to the utmost bounds of possibility, comprehends all causes and discerns with precision all effects; consequently, He knows the end from the beginning, and that, not only from philosophical principles, but also by intuition. As the Creator of all things and the originator of all law, He is thoroughly acquainted with all the intricate subtleties of physical, moral and intellectual law, so that no problem could arise the results of which are not manifest to His mind. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."—1 John 1:5.

God, the Creator of all things, is also the competent Sustainer of all things. In silent grandeur, from Age to Age, the whole physical universe fulfils His will, without a suspicion of disorder or mishap; and the same Power is pledged for its sustenance throughout the eternal future.

Thus from His own vast, inherent resources of Power and Wisdom, springs the peace of God. But not from this source alone is the Divine peace; for peace is the certain concomitant of inherent goodness. God is the impersonation of every virtue and every grace; and consequently He has the blessed satisfaction and peace of conscious moral perfection as well as inherent Wisdom and Power.

God's Emotional Nature

Yet we find this peace of God coexisting with much of disorder and trouble. As a Father He shows us that He bears a father's love to all His intelligent creatures—"the whole family [of God] in Heaven and in earth"—and that for His "pleasure they are and were created." (Eph. 3:15; Rev. 4:11.) He created them in His own likeness—with the same mental and moral attributes, so that He might have communion and fellowship with them as sons, and they with Him as a Father, that thus, in mutual fellowship and communion, the Creator and the creature might find pleasure, happiness and delight.

This likeness of God includes in all not only the same mental faculties, but also the free exercise of the same in the formation of character. A creature incapable of thus forming character would not be in God's likeness. And for the purpose of developing character, the alternative of good and evil must be placed before him. The right and the wrong principles of action must be discerned and the individual left free to his own choice in the matter, that the pleasure of God may be realized in the virtuous character resultant from the free choice of righteousness.

Since the love of God for His newly created and innocent creatures is akin to, but much stronger than, the love of an earthly parent for an innocent infant; and since that loving interest and solicitude does not grow cold as the creature advances in years, but earnestly watches for the development of the principles and fruits of righteousness, it is manifest that, like an earthly parent, God experiences the sense of either pleasure or pain, according as His free, intelligent creatures choose the right course or the wrong. Of this we are fully assured, not only by thus reasoning from the fact of His Fatherhood, but also by all of those Scriptures which speak of some things as abominable, displeasing, hateful and despicable to Him and as giving Him no pleasure; which say that His anger burns against them, and that His indignation and wrath wax hot, even to their destruction. Other Scriptures speak of His pleasure, love, joy and delight in pleasing things—in the principles of righteousness and those who obey them—the appreciation of pleasurable emotions of an opposite character, for pain and pleasure may properly be considered the ebb and flow of the same emotion.

These exhibitions of the mind of God indicate clearly an emotional nature in the Divine Being, of which fact we might also judge from the realization of our own emotional nature, since man was created in God's image. No, dear friends, God is not a God of stoical indifference, insensible to the emotions of pleasure and of pain; but the perfect poise of His attributes preserves the equilibrium of peace under all circumstances, whether of pain or pleasure.

God's Peace Unbroken by External Discord

With this thought, then, let us consider the circumstances under which the marvelous Peace of God has been perpetually maintained. The deep-laid Plan of God in all His creative works required long **aions** [ages] for its accomplishment. Across the vista of ages He saw in His purpose the glory of an intelligent creation in His own likeness, established in righteousness and worthy of His gift of eternal life. He therein saw the mutual pleasure of the Creator and the creature, and with a peaceful patience He resolved to wait for the glorious consummation.

As the Plan developed and time rolled on, the free moral agency of His creatures, misused by some, was enabling them to develop evil characters. By this means discord was introduced into His family—"the family [of God] in Heaven and in earth"—all His creatures, angels and men; and the family was divided, some holding to righteousness and some choosing to do evil. But such a contingency was one of the foreseen necessities of the far reaching Plan, the glorious outcome of which, was, in the Divine judgment, worth the cost of all the trouble and loss which He foresaw.

What a dreadful thing is family discord! How a prodigal son or a wayward daughter often brings the gray hairs of the human parent down with sorrow to the grave! Ah, the Heavenly Father knows something of such sorrow; for He saw Satan, one of His sons (Isa. 14:12), an angel of light, fall as lightning from Heaven. (Luke 10:18.) For six thousand years, at least, that son has been in open, defiant rebellion against God, and most actively and viciously engaged in inciting further rebellion and wickedness. He saw many of the angels leave their first estate (Jude 6) and become the allies of Satan, and then He saw also the whole human race fall into sin. Did ever any human parent find such a conspiracy—so virulent and hateful—spring up in his family? Surely not!

Then God found it necessary to perform the unpleasant duties of discipline. In His Justice He must disown the disloyal sons and deal with them as enemies. Though all the while His Fatherly Love was preparing to bless the deceived and fallen ones when the purposes of redemption should restore the repentant to His favor, Love must be veiled, while only stern, relentless Justice could be manifested. This has been no happifying duty, nor has the attitude of the sinner been pleasing to Him.

Consider the Love against which these recreants sinned. Though from God cometh every good and perfect gift, His favors have been despised, His love spurned, His righteous authority conspired against and defied, His character maligned, misrepresented, made to appear odious, hateful, unrighteous and even despicable. Yet, through it all the peace of God continues, and for six thousand years He has endured this contradiction of sinners against Himself. And still, O wondrous grace! His Love abounds; and it is written that He so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son to die for them; and that through Him judgment (trial) is also to be extended to those angels that fell, with the exception of Satan, the leader and instigator of the whole conspiracy—the father of lies.—John 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:10, 14.

God's Peace Compatible With Sorrow

This gift of Divine Love was another indication of the cost to our Heavenly Father of His great and marvelous Plan. Not only did He behold the fall into sin of a large proportion of His family, but their recovery cost the sacrifice of the dearest treasure of His heart, and the subjection of this beloved One to the most abject humiliation, ignominy, suffering and death. Again the illustration of a parent's love assists us in comprehending the cost of this manifestation of Jehovah's Love. With what tender and yearning emotions of Love must He have made this sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased! In addition to all the graces of character manifested since the very dawn of the being of the Logos, was now added the further grace of full submission to the Divine will, even when the pathway pointed out was one of humiliation and pain.

Ah, did the Father let Him go on that errand of mercy without the slightest sensation of sorrowful emotion? Had He no appreciation of the pangs of a father's love when the arrows of death pierced the heart of His beloved Son? When our dear Lord said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and again, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt," did it touch no sympathetic chord in the heart of the Eternal? Yea, verily: the unfeigned love of the Father sympathetically shared the Lord's sorrow.—Matt. 26:38, 39.

The principle taught in the Divine Word, that true love weeps with those that weep and rejoices with those who rejoice, is one which is also exemplified in the Divine character. The immortal Jehovah could not Himself die for us. His Divine nature being proof against death. And even if He could have died, there would have been no higher power to raise Him out of death. Thus all creation would have been left forever without a Governor, and only disaster and ruin could have ensued. But God could and did sacrifice at great cost to His loving, fatherly nature, the dearest treasure of His heart; and thus He manifested (1 John 4:9) the great Love wherewith He loved His deceived and fallen creatures. If this sacrifice cost Him nothing, if it were impossible for His mind to realize any painful emotion even under such a circumstance, then the gift of His Son would be no manifestation of His Love: for that which costs nothing, manifests nothing.

Our Lord Jesus also manifested His great sympathy for the Father in the misrepresentation of His character which He has so patiently endured for ages. It was the one effort of His life to glorify the Father and to rectify among men the false impressions of His glorious character—to show to men His goodness, benevolence, love and grace, and to lead them to love the merciful God who so loved them, even while they were yet sinners, as to seek them out and to plan for their eternal salvation.

God's Peace Self-centered

Yes, there has been great commotion in the disrupted family of God—commotion in which the Lord declares He has had no pleasure (Psa. 5:4); but, nevertheless, the Peace of God has never been disturbed. In the full consciousness of His own moral perfection, His unerring Wisdom, His mighty Power, and with the fullest appreciation of Justice and the keenest and most ardent love of the beauty of holiness, patiently and peacefully, and even joyfully in the midst of tribulation, He has endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself for six thousand years.

But during the seventh millennium, according to the Divine purpose, it will be the joyful privilege of our Lord Jesus fully to manifest to all creatures in Heaven and in earth the Father's glorious character. Then will the Father rejoice in the grandeur of His finished work and in the everlasting peace and happiness of His family in Heaven and on earth, "reunited under one Head."—Eph. 1:10.—Diaglott.

This blessed consummation will not be realized, however, until the incorrigible fallen sons of God, disowned and disinherited because they loved unrighteousness and would not be reclaimed, shall have been cut off. This will be the last unpleasant duty of the Creator and Father of all, who positively declares that it is a sad duty, yet nevertheless one which He will have the fortitude to perform in the interests of universal righteousness and peace. Hear Him: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"—Ezek. 33:11.

Thus we see that the Peace of God is compatible with great commotion and with sorrow and pain of any kind; for it is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but upon the proper balancing of the mind and the conditions of a perfect heart. Such peace—the Peace of God—was enjoyed also by our Lord Jesus in the midst of all the turmoil and confusion of His eventful earthly life. And this brings us to the consideration of our Lord's legacy to His disciples, when He was about to leave the world, as expressed in His own words:

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth [in stinted measure or in perishable quality], give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14:27.

Our Lord's Last Will and Testament

Thus with abounding compassion and tenderness, did our Lord, on the last night of His earthly life, bestow upon His beloved disciples His parting blessing, His legacy of Peace. It was the richest legacy He had to bequeath, and was one of priceless value. It was the promise of that tranquility of soul, that rest and ease of mind, which He Himself possessed—the Peace of God. It was the same peace which the Father has Himself always enjoyed, even in the midst of all the commotion which the permission of evil has brought about: but it was not derived from the same source. In Jehovah this peace was self-centered; He realized in Himself the omnipotence of Power and Wisdom; while the peace of Christ was centered, not in himself, but in God, by faith in His Wisdom, Power and Grace. So also if we would have the Peace of God, the peace of Christ—"My peace"—it must, like His, be centered in God by faith.

Yes, the peace of Christ was a priceless legacy. Yet how quickly the stormcloud of trouble, which was even then growing very dark, burst in its fury upon the heads of those very disciples to whom the words were directly addressed. It followed almost immediately the gracious bequest, and struck consternation, bewilderment, confusion, to their hearts and shook their faith from center to circumference. Then, where was the peace? While the Lord was speaking the words, the foul betrayer, Judas, was out on his murderous errand. Then followed the agony in Gethsemane, and the terror and consternation among the disciples as they began to realize the fate of their beloved Lord. Soon their almost breathless suspense deepened into more fearful forebodings as He stood alone before His merciless accusers and persecutors in the Hall of Pilate and the Court of Herod, while they were powerless to shield Him. Then came the tragic end—the horrors of the crucifixion.

What Had Become of the Peace?

Where was the promised peace under such circumstances—when, overcome with fear and dread, they all forsook Him and fled; and when St. Peter, although anxious to defend Him, was so filled with fear that **three times** he denied his Lord and with cursing declared that he never knew Him? The explanation is, that the **peace** had not yet **come**: for as the Apostle Paul tells us, "Where a **testament** is, there must also of necessity be the **death** of the **testator.** For a testament [a bequest] is of force **after men are dead**: otherwise it is of **no strength at all** while the testator **liveth.**" (Heb. 9:16, 17.) But as soon as the tragic scene was over and the cry, "It is finished," fell upon their eager ears, strange as it may seem, there is evidence that **peace** began to steal into their grieving hearts. The darkened heavens, the quaking earth, the rending rocks, the torn veil of the Temple—all spoke to them a message of comfort which the world could not receive.

To the world (Jews and Gentiles, both participating in the crime) the language of these events was that of Divine wrath and indignation against them. And as fear fell upon the people, and the clamor and excitement of that awful day died away, they smote upon their breasts and returned to their homes. The Roman centurion and they that were with him, fearing greatly, said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

But to the disciples of the Lord these events spoke a very different language. The cause of their blessed Master was **their** cause and it was **God's** cause. To them these supernatural demonstrations were evidences that God was not regarding this matter with indifference; and though through the veil of darkness they could not read His bright designs, in these events there was to them a whisper of **hope.**

Three days later hope was revived by the news of our Lord's resurrection, confirmed to them by His appearance in their midst. Again forty days later hope was strengthened by His ascension after His parting counsel and blessing and promised return, and the instructions to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of adoption, not many days thence—at Pentecost. Then the peace of Christ, the Lord's rich legacy, began to be realized, and the tarrying days of prayer and expectancy were days of abiding peace—peace which flowed as a river. But when on the day of Pentecost the promised Comforter came, the river of their peace found a deeper bed; and their joy knew no bounds!

"Like a river glorious is **God's perfect peace,**
Over all victorious in its glad increase.
Perfect; yet it floweth **fuller** every day;
Perfect; yet it groweth **deeper** all the way."

Our Rich Legacy of Peace

But not alone to the early Church was this legacy of peace bequeathed. It is the blessed inheritance of the entire Church, even to the end of the Age. The Lord showed His thought for us all on that very day, when in His prayer He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those who shall believe on Me through their word."—John 17:20.

The peace promised, observe, is not the short-lived peace of the world, which is sometimes enjoyed for a little season—while fortune smiles and friends abound and health endures, but which quickly vanishes when poverty comes in and friends go out, when health fails and death steals away the treasures of the heart. "My peace," the peace of God which Christ Himself by faith enjoyed, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, who lost friend after friend, and in His last hour was forsaken by all of the few that remained—His peace endured through loss, persecution, scorn and contempt, and even amidst the agonies of the cross. This peace is something which none of the vicissitudes of the present life can destroy, and which no enemy can wrest from us.

What richer legacy could the Lord have left His beloved people? Suppose He had bent His energies during His earthly life to the accumulation of money; and that in so doing He had amassed an immense fortune to leave in the hands of His disciples wherewith to push forward the great work of the Age when He should be taken from them; money to pay the traveling expenses of the Apostles and to defray the numerous expenses incidental to the starting of the work in various places, such as the renting of lecture rooms, the payment of salaries to traveling brethren, etc., etc. How soon would it all have vanished, and how poor would be our inheritance today! "The Man of Sin" would surely have gotten hold of it in some way, and not a vestige of the legacy would have reached this end of the Age. But, blessed be God, His rich legacy of peace still **abounds** to His people!

The peace promised is not such as the world can always recognize and appreciate; for the possessor of it, like the Lord Himself, and like the Heavenly Father as well, may have a stormy pathway. Indeed, that it must be so to all the faithful until the purposes of God in the permission of evil are accomplished, we are distinctly forewarned, but with the assurance that through all the storms this peace shall abide—"In the **world** ye shall have tribulation, but **in Me** ye shall have peace."

Faith the Basis of Peace

If we would know the foundation and security of this abiding peace which is able to survive the heaviest storms of life, we have only to look to the teaching and example of the Lord and the Apostles. What was it that held them so firmly and gave them such rest of mind while they suffered? It was **their faith**—their faith in the Love, Power and Wisdom of God. They **believed** that what God had **promised,** He was able also to **perform,** and that His righteous and benevolent Plan could know no failure. By the mouth of His Prophets He had declared, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. . . . Yea, I have **spoken** it and I will **bring it to pass**; I have **purposed** it, I will also **do it.**" "The Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" (Isa. 46:9-11; 14:27.) On the assurances of God they rested. In Him their faith was anchored; and it mattered not how fiercely the storms raged or how they were tossed by the tempests of life while their anchor still held fast to the Throne of God.

The language of our Lord's faith was, "O righteous Father, the **world** hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee." He had been with the Father from the beginning, had realized His Love and His goodness, and had seen His Power, and had marked His righteousness and His loving kindness and Fatherly providence over all His works. And so it is written, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11.) The knowledge which He had of the Father gave to Him a firm footing for faith in all God's purposes concerning the future. Hence He could and did walk by faith. And that faith enabled Him to overcome all obstacles and to secure the victory even over death.

So also it is written for our instruction—"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"—that faith in God built, in our case, upon our Lord's testimony of the Father; and again it is written that, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It is only through steady, unwavering faith that the peace of God—the peace of Christ—will abide with His people. While the Lord was with His disciples, and they saw in Him the manifestation of the Father, their faith was strong and they had peace in Him, as He said, "While I was in the world I kept them." But not until after He had left them was their faith anchored in God. After Pentecost they experienced the same peace that Christ had enjoyed—the blessed peace that came from a knowledge of the fact that God acknowledged them as sons and heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ, if they would continue faithfully to follow in the steps of the Redeemer.

Cultivation of Unwavering Faith

Herein is also the basis of our peace. No matter how fiercely the storms of life may assail us, we must never let go our anchor and allow ourselves to drift, but always remember that "the foundation of God standeth sure"; that "His Truth is our shield and buckler"; that "what He has promised He is able also to perform," notwithstanding our human imperfections and frailties; that covering these we have the imputed righteousness of Christ, our Surety and Advocate; and that "the Father Himself loveth" us. "He considereth our frame and remembereth that we are dust," and so has compassion for the sons of His Love and is very pitiful and of tender mercy. Indeed, "What more can He say than to us He hath said," to assure our faith and to steady and strengthen our hearts to patient endurance in the midst of the trials and conflicts of the narrow way of sacrifice.

There is nothing which puts the Christian at greater disadvantage in the presence of his foes than for him to let go, even temporarily, his grip upon the anchor of faith. Let him do so for a moment, and of necessity darkness begins to gather round him. He cannot see the brightness of his Father's face; for "without faith it is impossible to please God": and while he grapples again for the anchor, the powers of darkness fiercely assail him with doubts and fears. These attacks are generally based upon his human imperfections, which he should ever bear in mind are covered by the Robe of Christ's righteousness.

If we would have the peace of God reign in our hearts, we must never let go our anchor, "nor suffer Satan's deadliest strife to beat our courage down." The language of our hearts should always be, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." With this faith the peace of God, the peace which the Master bequeathed to us, ever abides. Thus "the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"; for it is written again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

In the midst of the Christian warfare let our hearts be cheered and our minds be stayed, not only with such assurances that all the Divine purposes shall be accomplished, but also with such promises of personal favor as these:

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." "Can a woman forget her suckling child? . . . Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have engraven thee upon the palms of My hands." "The Father Himself loveth you," and "It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." "Such as are upright in their way are His delight." "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"—the peace of God, even in the midst of storm and tempest.—Z. '13: 227-231.

Saul and David in Review

2 Samuel 5:12.

Golden Text:—"And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake."

OF the two men in review Saul certainly had the more favorable opportunities at the beginning of his life. Nature seemed to have so specially fitted him for the office of king that when he was brought to the attention of the people, they, recognizing these natural traits, received him without hesitation. For a little while, he walked in humility, carefully seeking to do the Lord's will, but not having fully submitted himself, it was not long until there was a combination of his own will mixing with that of the Lord. The result was disobedience, failure, a troubled mind growingly perverse almost to the point of insanity, and finally an ignominious death. The flaw in Saul's character was his lack of a full consecration to the Lord, his maintaining a certain amount of self-will. This seemed to have been the difficulty. A similar difficulty affects all who fail to make their calling and election sure. Whether they go into the Second Death or the Great Company, the fault of the failure lies in neglect to surrender fully to the Lord every interest of life and to accept in faith his leadings, his providences in all the affairs of life, seeking to do his will and ignoring—mortifying—self.

David's character was in sharp contrast to that of Saul. Less favorably circumstanced at the beginning of his career, not so tall and commanding in appearance, probably of a less wealthy family, and possibly with no better mental endowment by birth, David's life and its results are in sharp contrast to those of Saul. Look wherever we will in his checkered career, we see courage and determination exercised along right lines, proper lines. He was not a wild animal hunter, but to protect the flock he slew the lion and the bear. He was not a pugilist nor a gladiator; yet at the proper moment he was ready to risk his life for the defence of his people. He appreciated highly the honor that had been conferred upon him in his anointing for the kingship, yet he held this with modesty—never boasted of it and never rashly attempted to hasten the divine programme. He endured patiently the opposition of the king, yet treated the members of the royal family with profoundest respect; and finally, instead of thrusting himself on the nation as king and demanding his acceptance, he still waited patiently the Lord's time. One of the results of studying the lives of great and good men is in seeing the way in which they were able to make the world better.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time."

Many of those who have risen to prominence in the world have left no footprints that we can see; but when the Lord sets great examples before us, he shows us the footprints, and how some lead downward and others upward. Saul was of the former class, David of the latter. The important point to be noticed by us all is how much these footprints diverge, that we may avoid the one and profit by the other. The secret of David's success was not the mere fixity of his purpose, but additionally the fact that his purpose was kept fully in accord with the divine will. Even in telling to King Saul the story of his conflict with the lion and the bear, he gave glory to God as having delivered them into his hands. And so throughout his entire career. We notice this same desire, to give God the glory of his successes, and to realize that whatever failures there were in his life were either his own weaknesses or divine blessings in disguise. Thus we see David's whole existence exemplifying the words of holy writ—"In all thy ways acknowledge him," "and he shall give thee the desire of thine heart."

Value in High Ideals

As we look about us in the world, and in the nominal church, we see vast numbers of mankind without any ideals, without any ambition. Alas, poor things! How can they ever have any pleasure or reach any noble goal when they see none? Looking again, we perceive some with only mean and groveling ambitions, worse than none. Poor creatures! Born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and perhaps reared in unfavorable environments, they are seriously handicapped in comparison with some others of the fallen race, less depraved and more favored. Looking again, we see a third class with noble worldly ambitions, seeking for wealth, influence, power, with a desire to use these honorably, nobly, not to the injury of their fellow-creatures, but to some extent the opposite. These are to be congratulated as having better motives in life than the first two classes. They were possibly better born and possibly had better environment.

We look again and find a fourth class, whose eyes have by the grace of God been lifted from earthly things to the heavenly. To these, "Old things have passed away and all things have become new." The vision of heavenly joy, heavenly fellowship, heavenly service, has so transformed their minds that, although their flesh may still be weak, nevertheless they overcome by the new mind. This is the class which the earth could never satisfy. A new standard of values has come to them; and they both feel and know that the things of this life are "not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." They find these things in comparison but loss and dross. This is the class which the Lord has under his special care and instruction. Because they have made their consecration to him, he is showing them something of the height and depth, the length and breadth of the "deep things" of God. Thus he is giving to them, through his knowledge and grace, a power divine, which is working in them both to will and to do his good pleasure. The secret of their attainment of this favored position is that, having heard of the grace of God, their hearts responded. They gave themselves to the Lord and the work of grace progressing in them is his work. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."—Eph. 2:10; Jas. 1:8.

A Double-Minded Man Is Unstable

But now again we must recognize a division; for "they are not all Israelites who are of Israel." Some of this fourth class are more responsible and some less responsible as to the things which the Lord has shown them respecting his character and his plan. Some take a less positive stand and seek to gain the things of this world, its honor, as well as the honor of God and the world to come. In doing this, they are not heeding the words of the Master, who assures all his disciples that such a course would mean failure, that they would neither please the world nor would they succeed in pleasing the Lord. Such may eventually be brought to life eternal, but they are not the wise virgins. They will not reign in the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord is seeking those who worship him with all their hearts, with all their souls, with all their strength, and with all their minds. These whole-souled ones are the class the Lord is specially seeking as the Queen of the Millennial Kingdom, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, and joint-heirs with him. He has already foreordained that only such may be members of the royal family and partakers of the divine nature, saying, "Whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." To these he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them, because they walk uprightly. Their hearts are upright, and their intentions are loyal to God and to his laws of justice and love. Let us get fixed in our minds the peculiar quality of this overcoming class, which is to constitute the Kingdom as Christ's joint-heirs, that they must be loyal to God, consecrated, determined, and full of faith and trust.

These qualities cannot be expected to come to us instantaneously. Rather they are the gradual growth and development of the new mind, but the principle must be in the heart before development can be made along these lines—the principle of loyalty and determination. The little word "will" has its very important place, then, in the Christian's character. He must be a willer, and the will must be rightly directed into full harmony with that of God.

Carving Out the Ideal

We said a moment ago that a high and good ideal is proper, is necessary, in every successful life. But to have the ideal will amount to nothing unless we are patient in its development. It is said of the great sculptor, Michael Angelo, that looking upon a block of soiled marble he began work upon it with hammer and chisel, apparently recklessly knocking off great blocks and pieces here and there. When asked what he was doing, he said, "I see an angel here and must get him out." He had the ideal in his mind, then laboring strenuously for the attainment of it, sculptured the angel out of the block of marble. So it must be with every successful life. We must have the ideal. We must see the angel. Then we must labor for its attainment, carefully, patiently, and prayerfully. The ideal set before the Christian is not only angelic, it is more; it is divine. Nothing less can be made out of the Apostle's words, God hath "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."

The same thought is elsewhere presented by St. John. Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear how great we shall be made, what glory and honor shall be ours, but the Apostle assures us, "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." If then we are to be made like him by the "change" of the "First Resurrection," if we are to see him as he is, then we may apply to ourselves the glorious things of the Lord and his excellency, respecting which the Apostle says, "Him hath God highly exalted and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth;" and again, "He has ascended far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named." If we shall be like him and share his glory, then all this glory belongs to the glorious ideal which God himself has presented to our gaze. Who with such in view would not be willing indeed to submit himself to the blows of the Lord! Who would not be willing to endure the necessary chiselings and polishings! Who would not be willing to submit himself to tribulation, knowing that "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope"! These things shed abroad in our hearts make us neither barren nor unfruitful in respect to the knowledge of God, but obtain for us an abundant entrance into his everlasting Kingdom, in association with him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood.

The Lord Had Established Him

Our Golden Text is quite in line with what we have just received, and shows us afresh the secret of David's successes and the line along which we also should be exercised in developing character which will be pleasing to the Lord. To some in David's place the thought would have been, "The Lord is very partial and has simply elected me to be the recipient of his favors. He cares more for me than for any other person in the nation." With this thought would have come a measure of vanity and pride which would have been very injurious to David (and to all others). These might also have said, "The Lord has seen that I am the fittest person in all this nation to be its ruler; and any person who does not fully agree with this sentiment is out of accord with the Lord and should have my frown and disapproval." Had David taken a position such as this it would have worked out a wrong character in him; and such a position taken by others would likewise work injuriously. It makes them boastful, arrogant, unloving, and unfits them for proper service to the Lord.

David's thought on the subject was the proper one. He perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel and that he had **exalted him king for his people Israel's sake.** So, too, we should remember that God has a purpose in the selection or election of the Church. As the Apostle says, "We are chosen for a purpose." God's purpose is a Kingdom which shall bless the world. And he has many others, angels and men, whom he could have chosen for this great purpose, and by his providence could have moulded, and fashioned them for the accomplishment of his will. But by his mercy he has chosen "not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty," but "the weak things of this world" for the carrying out of his plans. Let this thought keep us very humble, very near to the Lord. Let us strive to learn the lessons necessary to fit and prepare us for the ruling, judging and uplifting "all the families of the earth."—Z. '08: 298-300.

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There is a very valuable lesson for all of the Lord's dear people in this word, "The will of the Lord be done." We should each seek to know the will of the Lord. If first of all our consecration be complete, even unto death, it will mean that we are seeking to know what the will of the Lord is respecting us, and it will mean that as we learn his will we will do it at any cost. It will mean that we will be on the outlook for the Lord's providences in all of our affairs, realizing that nothing happens by chance to those who are in covenant relationship with God, as members of the Body of Christ,—that all things must work together for good to them. A fuller realization of the divine care over the elect would, doubtless, often guide our steps aright by directing the eye of faith to expect the Lord's leadings and to look for them in all matters that are of any importance.—Z. '03:126.

"I Am the Bread of Life"

John 6:26-37.

Golden Text:—"Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life."

AFTER partaking of the miraculously provided supper, the multitude, evidently according to their habit, lay down in the fields, wrapping themselves in their outer garments. Indeed, this is even today a prevailing custom in Palestine with the poorer people when on a journey. In the morning they looked about for their benefactor, evidently expecting to find Jesus in the same vicinity, and no doubt also expecting that he would miraculously provide for their breakfast. But not finding him nor the boat in which the disciples had come they journeyed onward towards Jerusalem, but still on the lookout for the reputed Messiah. When finally they came upon the Lord and his company they told of their search—and our lesson for today begins with our Lord's reply. You seek me not because of the miracle, but because of the satisfactory and free supper which you received. Here we perceive the wisdom of the Lord in not pressing matters too earnestly. He preached no sermon when he performed the miracle, but allowed it to have its effect; but now, instead of working another miracle, he preached a sermon, using his miracle as a text.

His reproof was not harsh, although it was quite pointed: Strive not for the food which perisheth, but for that kind which will produce everlasting life. This is the kind which the Son of man is prepared to give unto you, for him the Father, even God, hath sealed, indicated, marked as his appointed channel for blessing. The lesson contained in these words is obvious, and is as applicable today as then. The trouble with the whole world is that they have either earthly aims or no aims at all, and of the two conditions the latter is the worse. It is the people with aims, with purposes in life who are accomplishing something in themselves and for others. These are the worldly wise, who make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, who build factories and works and conduct large enterprises, and to whom in large measure civilization owes so much. They have ambition to be rich or to be wise or to be famed, and these ambitions spur them on to works.

But, alas! the great majority of mankind are in a much worse case, for without ambition they are merely eating to live and living to eat—merely animals of a higher intelligence. They labor for the meat that perisheth—it is their aim, their goal, and sometimes includes the inebriating cup, which steals from them whatever of sense they may have. Our Lord would have his hearers, including all his followers down through the age, note this message from his lips: that although the meat that perisheth is necessary under present conditions, those who are his followers will remember that their heavenly Father knoweth they have need of these and will not suffer them to come to serious want. And thus being without anxious care for the bread that perisheth they might turn their entire attention not to earthly but heavenly ambitions—the noblest, the grandest of all they might aspire to, because such blessed children come within the range of divine blessing of life everlasting. The meat, the food that would develop in them such an ambition and lead to its satisfaction, would be food indeed and well worthy of every exertion to obtain it.

What Shall We Do?

The discourse had its effect; the people realized that they were leading comparatively aimless lives, or that their aims were earthly and therefore would perish with their dying, and they asked the Lord what kind of work or labor he meant they should perform to secure the food that would bring the divine favor and gain them eternal life. What do you mean by works that would please God? This is just the point that Jesus wished to bring them to and that he wished to answer. He replied that the work for them to do at once was to exercise faith in him as the Sent of God—the Messiah. But they replied, What reason have we to think of you as the Messiah? Work for us some conclusive sign that will prove that you are Messiah and we will believe. The fact that you fed five thousand of us last evening with five loaves and two small fishes does not prove your Messiahship. Messiah is to be like Moses, only greater than Moses, and the miracle you performed is not as great as some that Moses performed. You furnished five thousand one meal and had the loaves and fishes to start with, but Moses fed our fathers for years in the wilderness without any bread as a start. The manna which he provided came down from heaven; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." They were good reasoners in some respects—they were not going to be too easily converted, they wished to be thoroughly convinced before they would believe Jesus to be the Messiah; they had heard of others who had been deceived by false Messiahs; they were intending to stick close to the Scriptural record and to see that the one they would accept as Messiah must be greater than Moses, able to feed them and all the people every day—and with bread superior to that which Moses gave in the wilderness.

Then was Jesus' turn to expound his teaching and to show that the comparison as between himself and Moses was not as to who would give a finer kind of earthly food and more of it, but that he would give a heavenly food, a spiritual food, which would secure to them a heavenly life. He therefore called attention first of all to their mistake in thinking the giving of the manna to be the work of Moses, saying plainly, It was not Moses that gave the bread from heaven, but my Father; do not credit that to the wrong source. Moses was indeed an honored servant of the Lord as the Lawgiver of Israel, but he neither gave the manna nor sent it. My Father who sent that manna in the wilderness has now sent another kind of bread, another kind of food, another kind of manna from heaven—not literal, but symbolical. The bread which God is now about to send to his people, also comes down from heaven and is intended to be the Bread of life for the whole world

—not merely day by day for a few years, but for life everlasting.

"Evermore Give Us This Bread"

The lessons were going home to their hearts, as we know by their reply, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread." We note the similarity of expression here with that used by the Samaritan woman to whom the Lord mentioned the gift of life under the figure of the water of life—"Evermore give me this water." The answers in both cases show us the longings of the people of that time, both Jews and Samaritans, for something superior to what they had. As the poet has declared, "There are longings infinite in the human mind"—longings for life eternal. From remote times history tells us of how people in every clime have sought for health-springs and health-foods that thus they might have a longer continuance of the present life and, if possible, an annulment of death entirely. All realize that this has not yet been attained, and the war still goes on. It is on the strength of such longings of the soul for continued life that patent medicines thrive. We are glad that there is such a longing in the human mind for a perpetuation of life; it becomes, as in this case and in the case of the Samaritan woman, a basis for further investigation for the eternal life which the Lord proffered.

Our Lord replied, "I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Again our Lord's words would undoubtedly be beyond the depth of the people's understanding. We can imagine their consternation, and to assist us in sympathizing with them we should remember that they were not Spirit-begotten, because Pentecost had not yet come, "the holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) Indeed, we find that this question is a very abstruse one with many of the Lord's people today, and few comprehend it with any clearness except the Spirit-begotten. Let us make the matter as plain as possible by continuing the investigation of the context. Therein Jesus explains that he himself had come down from heaven—not merely like the manna from the clouds, but from heaven itself, having laid aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, having humbled himself to an exchange of his previous spirit nature for the earthly nature in which he was then addressing them—the man Christ Jesus. But they could not eat him while he was alive, nor could they even understand what he meant when he said, "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed," and they reasoned, Will this man give us his flesh to eat? Is that what he means? The lesson was too deep for them; but, thank God, not too deep for us. As then some of the disciples forsook Jesus and walked no more with him, saying, "This is a hard saying, who can receive it?" so today there are some who cannot receive this teaching, which is the fundamental one of the Gospel of Christ. Whoever cannot receive this lesson cannot receive the other lessons which are built upon it. Our Lord further explained, "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." He had not yet given his flesh, though he was in the process of giving it; he was drawing out its vitality, its strength, in their service, but would complete the work of his sacrifice, by surrendering his all to death—even the death of the cross. And this he did later.

"We Eat His Flesh"

We do not eat the flesh of Jesus literally—we eat it by faith; that is to say, we appropriate by faith to ourselves the merit, the efficacy which was in his flesh and which he surrendered to death on our behalf. But why was this, and what did he surrender, and how do we partake of it? We answer that Adam as the head of the race had forfeited his life through disobedience and hence, instead of being able to propagate a race of perfect beings in harmony with God and privileged to have eternal life, his offspring was like himself, dying, unworthy of eternal life. In God's arrangement a redemptive sacrifice was necessary—some one must take Adam's place, suffer death for him in order to release him and to justify his race from the original sentence. No human being could be found who was perfect and who could give to Justice a ransom for his brother—for all were sinners, coming short of the glory, the perfection, which God recognizes as essential to eternal life. It was to meet these requirements that God made the arrangement with his Son by which the latter freely, gladly, for the joy set before him, died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18.) So, then, it was our Lord's flesh or human nature that was given for Adam and his race, and hence given for the life of the world, that the world of mankind might be recovered from under the sentence of death. Thus Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man and we are all redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood [life] of Christ, as a lamb without spot or blemish.—1 Pet. 1:18, 19.

We see, says one, how it was necessary for Christ to be made flesh and how it was necessary for him to give his flesh for the life of the world by going into death, but how shall we eat his flesh? is the question. Ah, we answer, the matter, as put in that figurative form, is beautifully simple and meaningful when we understand it. The eating of the Lord's flesh must be an individual matter on the part of all those who would benefit by his sacrifice. The eating represents the appropriating by faith. Thus, when one comes to an understanding of the fact of the redemption and believes therein and goes to God in prayer and by faith accepts the forgiveness of his sins and reconciliation with God, he in so doing is eating the flesh of the Son of man; he is partaking of those benefits or advantages which our Lord's flesh or sacrifice secured.

Justified By Our "Eating"

The result of such eating by faith signifies the appropriation to one's self of all the blessings and privileges which our Lord possessed as a perfect man; it implies our justification on the human plane, our relationship to God as those whose sins are graciously overlooked or covered and who have joy and peace and fellowship with God through faith in the precious blood. We are to continue to eat that we may grow stronger and stronger—that we may be able to appropriate more and more the wonderful blessings and privileges, relationships and divine favors which belonged to our Lord, but which he surrendered on our behalf and on behalf of all the members of Adam's race. Additionally, those who were rightly influenced by the eating—those who were drawn nearer to the Lord and led to a full consecration of their all to him—these received a special invitation during the Gospel Age to drink of his blood. The blood is the life in Scriptural language, and hence ordinarily the Jews were not to drink blood; to do so would make them guilty or responsible for the death of the person or creature. Thus the Jews said of our Lord, "His blood be upon us"—we assume the responsibility of his death.

And thus also the Apostle explains that those who partake of the blood of Christ symbolically in the communion cup are symbolically representing themselves as being guilty of the blood of Christ, guilty of the death of Christ—unless they partake of it with the proper, the intended signification. What is that intended signification? We answer that our Lord stated the matter at the last Supper, saying to his disiciples, "This is the cup of the New Covenant in my blood—drink ye all of it." This cup of the fruit of the vine represents my blood, my death; by it the New Covenant will eventually be sealed, and I invite you who believe on me to partake of this with me, to partake of this not as those who caused my death, but as those who voluntarily gave up their own lives and joined with me in this death, in this self-sacrifice. As you partake of this cup with me it signifies that you lay down your lives as I laid down mine and that you become participants with me in this cup which speaks, which means the great sacrifice, the great life given through which the New Covenant will be established, under which all the families of the earth will be blessed.

So, then, under the guidance of the holy Spirit through the words of the Apostle we may see a depth of meaning in our Lord's words which the people whom he addressed did not comprehend. Indeed, we believe that while our Lord addressed these words to the Jews he intended them more particularly for us to whom they have been communicated and by whom they have been more fully understood. We rejoice, then, in the justification which we have through partaking of his flesh—through being justified by the sacrifice of his humanity—our appropriation of our share of human justification. And we rejoice also that eventually the whole world shall be privileged to eat of that flesh—to accept the grace of God in the cancellation of their human sins and weaknesses, and to realize that all those blessings of restitution times, the blessings of the Millennium, will come to them because Christ died for their sins, because he gave to them his flesh to eat. The whole world is to eat of that Bread, and, as the Apostle intimates, the Church is now privileged to be a part with the Lord in the Loaf that is being broken, as well as to be participants in the cup of ignominy and self-sacrifice which the Father poured for him and which he permits us to share with him—for if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him, if we be dead with him we shall also live with him, if we drink of his cup we shall also share in his joys in the Kingdom by and by.—2 Tim. 2:12.

Whom the Father Giveth Shall Come

The multitude who had eaten of the bread the night before, and who now had received the explanation respecting the higher food necessary to eternal life, did not believe, although they recognized Jesus as a very wonderful personage indeed, and probably like another multitude, were ready to declare, "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:46.) Was our Lord disconcerted and disappointed because these thousands of Israel, heirs of the promises, received him not, heeded not his message? Nay, verily! Nor should we his followers think strange of it that the divine message should be incomprehensible to the great majority of the household of faith of our time. We read nothing of our Lord's becoming excited to a frenzy and appealing to the people and teaching them that they were about to fall into an eternity of torture if they did not receive him. We read nothing about the apostles going out amongst them and urging them to a mourner's bench. Quite to the contrary of all this. Jesus evidently expected that few would believe; he even turned to his disciples and said, "Will ye also go away?" But they answered, No; to whom should we go? from you we have the message of eternal life which comes from nowhere else. Master, we will stand by you; we could not do otherwise, our every interest is bound up in this glorious message which we have heard from your lips. We are ready to die with you, to drink of your cup.

Instead of manifesting any perturbation our Lord said to the multitude, This is what I told you before; ye have seen me, ye have believed not. Why? Because ye are not of the flock of sheep whom my Father hath given me to lead at the present time. Other sheep I have which are not of this flock; by and by I will attend to them. But now, "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"—reject. What is this if not an election, a selection? How much in harmony it is with what our Lord uttered in his prayer on the night before his crucifixion, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me . . . that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may [then, later] believe that thou hast sent me!" (John 17:9, 21.) As our Lord was not expecting all to come to him and to accept of his gracious offer and God's gracious provision in him and thus to be justified through eating his flesh, so he could not expect either that many would go on still-further and make the consecration to walk in his steps in the narrow way and thus be partakers of his cup and prospective joint-heirs with him. Oh,,no! these in all, from first to last, are but a Little Flock, but a very blessed Little Flock to whom, as the Master declared, the Father will give the Kingdom. (Luke 12:32.) And when they shall be changed and are like their Master and shall receive the Kingdom power and glory and dominion—then will come through that Kingdom the overthrow of the prince of darkness, the prince of this world; the overthrow of sin and the work of blessing, enlightening and uplifting all the poor world of mankind who are not now called and drawn by the Father!

Note our Lord's words in this connection, "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him." (John 6:44.) There is an exclusiveness about this: the time had not yet come, mentioned in Revelation, when the water of life shall flow freely, and whosoever will may come. (Rev. 22:17.) That glorious time belongs to the Millennial Kingdom and not to the present time . . . Mark the distinctive difference between the drawing by the Father and that later drawing of the Millennial Age, which will not be by the Father but by the Son, and which will not be exclusive but inclusive, including all mankind. Hearken to our Master's words to this effect, that "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32.) All men are not yet drawn to the Lord. Why? Because the lifting up is not yet complete. The Head was lifted up not only at Calvary but was subsequently highly exalted as a reward, and the members of his Body, the members of the Bride class who follow in his steps, must finish their course and also be highly exalted as his joint-heirs before the lifting-up process will be complete.

With that glorious "change" of the First Resurrection the Millennial Kingdom will be ushered in and during that wonderful reign of righteousness, that shining forth of the sun of light and truth for the blessing of the world, all mankind will be drawn away from sin and selfishness, away from sickness, pain and sorrow, away from everything that is evil, toward the Lord, that they may partake of his flesh indeed and have eternal life with all the blessings of restitution which God has provided through the great Redeemer. We are not in this teaching Universalism, for as many of those who are called and drawn now to be of the Bride class can, and many do, resist the drawings, or, as the Apostle says, "receive the grace of God in vain." So it will be possible to resist the drawings of the Millennial Age, as is pointed out in the Scriptures in various statements, of which this may suffice, "It shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be destroyed from amongst the people"—in the Second Death, without hope of any recovery. Note again the Lord's promise to these Elect ones whom the Father now draws and who now come and feed upon our Lord's flesh and who drink of his cup, his blood, and participate with him in his sacrifice. Their hope is stated in these words, "I will raise him up at the last day." The last day, the great seventh day, the Millennial day. Ah, yes! We remember it is written respecting the Church, the Bride class, "God shall help her right early in the morning" (Psa. 46:5)—the morning of that Millennial day. The six days, epochs of one thousand years each, from Adam have passed, the seventh is already dawning and the time is near at hand when the Bride, all glorious, shall be presented to the great King, the Father, by the great King, his Son, our Lord—"with gladness and rejoicing shall she be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace."—Psa. 45:15.

"I Will In No Wise Cast Out"

How glad we are that our dear Master added these words. Without them we might have doubted the efficacy of the calling and the drawing which we receive; and some might have said, Yes, I was indeed drawn, but evidently the Lord Jesus did not count me worthy of a place amongst his followers. He here assures us that the drawing of the Father which brings us to him with a desire to be his disciples will insure for us his aid, his succor, his assistance, his acceptance. Thus we may know that if we fail of the grace of God now provided for us in the high calling, it will be our own fault, because of failure to give heed to the voice of the Shepherd and to walk in his steps.—Z. '08:72-76.

The Royal Priesthood

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. . . . Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices* acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 2:9, 3-5.

AT NO TIME in the Church's history has our great adversary been so active in multiplying false doctrines and in diverting attention from the truth by introducing unprofitable and irrelevant questions as at present. Just when the exaltation and glory of the Church are soon to be accomplished, and when the faithful are about to be received into the joy of their Lord, every device is resorted to to beguile them of their reward and to frustrate this feature of the divine plan. To really frustrate any part of the divine plan is impossible: God has purposed to take out from among men a "little flock," "a people for his name," a royal priesthood; and such a company is assuredly being gathered; but whether all those now in the race for the prize will surely be of that company, is still an open question. Take heed, beloved, . . .

We beseech you, brethren, as you value the glorious hope set before you in the gospel, that you give no heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, as the Apostle terms them (1 Tim. 4:1), but that, with fixedness of purpose, you apply yourselves to the one thing which you are called and privileged to do as members prospectively of that Royal Priesthood. Let us never forget that we are a "peculiar people," separate from the great body of nominal Christians as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into his marvelous light. And if thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the worldly spirit, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us and either ignoring or opposing us.

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* Sinaitic MS. omits spiritual before sacrifices.

Such opposition is to be expected and will doubtless continue until we finish our course in death. To submit patiently to this opposition is to sacrifice our own **natural** preferments for the friendship and the pleasures of the present life and to endure hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake, in whatever shape that hardness may come, in our effort to do the Lord's will and work of advancing the interests of his Kingdom. This is what is meant by the presenting of our bodies living sacrifices in the divine service. To be really in this service involves first, the careful and continual study of God's plan; second, the imbibing of its spirit; leading, thirdly, to an enthusiastic zeal for its accomplishment, and to activity to the extent of ability in its service, at whatever cost or sacrifice it may require.

If we are faithful in this service we have no time, nor have we the disposition, to give heed either to false doctrines or to other themes which have no bearing on the **one thing** to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives. Our time is not our own if we have consecrated all to God; and consequently we have none to spare for the investigation of fanciful false theories, built upon other foundations than that laid down in the Scriptures; nor have we time to devote to the ideas and pursuits which engross the world's attention, many of which are harmless in themselves, but would be harmful to us if we were to allow them to occupy consecrated time and to divert our attention from the **one thing** we ought to be doing. The Apostle warns us "to shun profane babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness:" but adds, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." "Teach no other doctrine: neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith." —2 Tim. 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:3, 4.

Each consecrated believer should ask himself, How carefully have I studied that which I have clearly recognized as divine truth? and how fully capable am I, therefore, of handling the sword of the spirit? Few indeed are those who can say they have fully digested and assimilated all they have received; that they have let none of these things slip from memory; that they have so treasured it up in their hearts that it is their meditation by day and by night; that they have a ready answer —a "Thus saith the Lord"—for every man that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, concerning any point of doctrine; that they can clearly and intelligently portray the divine plan, quote the divine authority for each successive step of it, and, if need be, point out its place in the divine system of types. To gain such proficiency in the Word is indeed the work of a lifetime, but every day should see a closer approximation to that proficiency, and will, indeed, if we are faithful students and faithful servants of the truth. . . .

How narrow this way! say some contemptuously of those who, like Paul, devote their energies to the **one thing**—the service of the truth. Yes, that will be the verdict against you, of all except the few who, like yourself, have carefully sought out this "narrow way," and who are determined to walk in it regardless of the reproach it brings. The way to the prize of our high calling is not wide enough to admit all the vain philosophies and foolish questions and babblings and speculations of science, falsely so called. **It is only wide enough to admit the Lord's plan** and those who are willing to discard all other plans and projects and questionings and to devote themselves fully and entirely to its service, and who are quite willing to bear any reproach it may bring.

Consider your calling, brethren, for ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood to offer sacrifices acceptable to God; a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. . . . Can I truly affirm that I am

"All for Jesus, all for Jesus—
All my being's ransomed powers;
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,
All my days, and all my hours?"

If so, then we are just **narrow minded** enough to say, This one thing I do: and I make every thing else bend to this one thing of showing forth Gods' praises. . . .

Dearly beloved, we impose no vows or bondage upon each other, but the call has its own limitations. —Z. '92: 230-232.

Faith and Works

WHILST some go to the extreme of saying and hoping that their good **works** will commend them to God's favor, regardless of what **faith** they hold, others make the serious mistake of supposing that if they hold a **correct faith** there can be no necessity for **works.** But though faith in the redemptive work of Christ is indispensable—so that no works of ours would be acceptable to God without it— and though clear knowledge and faith respecting the divine plan are to be desired and sought, yet the **objective value** of all faith and knowledge is to lead the believer into **works of service for the Lord.**

Nor should we esteem works essential to the success of God's plan for the blessing and instruction of **others**; for, if we are unwilling, our God is able to use many other agencies. Rather we should esteem it a privilege to be co-workers with our God, to honor his name and to serve his people; and indeed it is thus that the worker in the Master's service is blessed—every effort to serve his Master adds to his strength and joy. The Lord is seeking for membership in his Bride such believers as feel so full of grateful joy for their own redemption and are so anxious to honor and serve their Redeemer that they esteem it a privilege to work in his service—a privilege to suffer as well as to labor for him and in co-operating with his plan.

This being the case, beloved, none of us can afford to exercise or cultivate a spirit of idleness. Those who idle away their time, and those who absorb it all in the service of business; or pleasure, or family, or self, are laying up no treasure in heaven, however much or little they may be laying by on earth. Present opportunities for sacrificing service are therefore to be esteemed, not only as the greatest privileges of the present life, but also as the greatest privileges ever offered or to be offered.

Let each one, then, ask himself—What am I doing for God, his plan and his people? If you are doing all that you can do, be glad and rejoice, even though that all be miserably small, even in your own estimation. It is the will and effort to do and to be that our Redeemer regards with loving favor. But if you are not doing all that you could do, be dissatisfied with yourself; and uneasy lest your listlessness and carelessness for his service settle it with the Master that you are unworthy to share in the work of glory as a member of his Church glorified.

Let each one resolve to do something each day to serve our gracious King—not to merit salvation, but as the expression of our love for him through whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins.

Our Lord does not despise our feeblest efforts when prompted by warm, overflowing hearts. The servant who has but one talent and uses it faithfully will be welcomed as a good and faithful servant, as surely as the one who uses faithfully two, five or more talents. He that is faithful with a little can be trusted with more, and he that is unfaithful in the use of one talent would be unfaithful with more. And every one who uses his talents faithfully finds them increasing daily. He who cannot deliver an oration can speak a quiet, pointed word, or write a letter. When so many privileges abound on every hand, surely all have several talents for service.

Be assured, dearly beloved, that neglect to use your privilege of serving the truth will react to your spiritual degeneracy. As a sound faith is for the purpose of leading to good works, so the activity of service is necessary to continued purity of faith.—Z. '92:258.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

"I WILL BE WITH THEE"

God's encouragement of Joshua was not along the lines common amongst men. He did not say to him, "Remember your age and long experience and previous successes as a general," etc., but he did give to him the better counsel, the assurance that as he had stood by Moses as his servant so he would be with him and would not forsake him and would not fail him in any hour of test and trouble. As a consequence of the Lord's assistance he was assured that no one would be able to withstand him all the days of his life, nor would any Israelite be permitted to occupy his place as the captain of the hosts during his lifetime.

Was it not thus with our Lord Jesus, too? And is not the Lord's message a similar one to all the members of the Body of Christ—"I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee"? In this let us rejoice while realizing that of ourselves we can do nothing.—Z. '07:282.

◇

In proportion to our love for the Lord will be our obedience to Him; and obedience to Him means obedience to the principles of righteousness for which He stands, and which are inculcated by His Word.—Z. '17:248.

◇

The humble spirit seeketh not its own, is not puffed up, and does not attempt to speculate on inflated values, does not think of self more highly than it ought to think, but thinks soberly—neither overrating nor under-rating its own acquirements or achievements. Humility strives always to do business on a solid basis, though it strives lawfully to acquire a real worthiness and to achieve the true glory of the divine commendation and favor.—Z. '93:5.

◇

If, in the Lord's providence, we are permitted to come into straits, into actual want, we should cry unto the Lord without stipulating what help or what kind or degree of assistance we should have. We must learn to trust the Lord's wisdom as superior to our own, and if we were to be granted wealth or even competence it might not be the best thing for us. Our petition, therefore, to the Lord should be, Give what is best! And faith should firmly trust him, come what may.—Z. '04:282.

◇

Our chief business should be the Lord's service; the comfortable fixing of our abode and our fellowship with our friends and relatives should not occupy the most important part of our time. We should remember the Apostle's words, "This one thing I do"; and applying them to ourselves we should be "instant (unceasingly) in season and out of season (when convenient and when inconvenient to ourselves)" in our service of our Lord and his cause.—Z. '03:184.

◇

We read that "he learned obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8.) The sufferings or chastisements or corrections were necessary to his glorification. And so it is with us, his brethren: our sins are graciously covered through the merit of his sacrifice; by faith we are accepted as every whit whole, and by faith our sacrifices are accepted, "holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom. 12:1.) Our chastisements, therefore, are not in the nature of penalties for the weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh, which Jesus has graciously covered for us; but our standing as new creatures is on the perfect plane, and the majority, at least, of our chastisements, like those of the Master, our elder Brother, are disciplinary, and to the intent that we may be ultimately complete in him, meet for the "inheritance of the saints in light."—Z. '03:16.

◆

When James and John asked the master for a position of honor in His Kingdom He said to them, "To sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give: but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." (Mark 10:40.) Clearly, then, exaltation comes only to those who willingly humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, that they may be shaped and prepared for His use.

The Psalmist makes the matter clear when he asks the question; "Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His Holy Place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—Psalm 24:3-5.

The Temple standing on Mount Moriah was typical of the glorious Temple of God. The Psalmist has here asked who will be accounted worthy to be exalted to the high position of membership in that great Temple—who will be permitted to reign with Christ in His Kingdom. Then he answers, "He that hath clean hands (meaning clean actions and conduct) and a pure heart (meaning purity of will, intention or purpose—a pure heart, loving righteousness and truth but hating iniquity); who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity (another evidence that pride is an abomination to the Lord and to all who partake of His spirit), nor sworn deceitfully (meaning those who have made a covenant with the Lord and who have earnestly tried to keep it)." These shall receive the blessing that the Lord promised in His Word.—Z. '17:345.

◆

"What use for rope if it be not flung
Till the swimmer's grasp to the rock has clung?
What help in a comrade's bugle blast
When the peril of Alpine heights is past?
What need that the stirring paeon roll
When the runner is safe within the goal?
What worth is eulogy's blandest breath
When whispered in ears that are hushed in death?
No, no! if you have but a word of cheer
Speak it while I am alive to hear."—Z. '03:126.

◆

How searching will be the tests which will prove our love and loyalty to the Lord and his divine arrangements is clearly intimated in our Lord's prophecy respecting our day when he said that the sifting would be of such a kind as would "deceive if it were possible the very elect." It will not be possible to deceive the very elect, because for these our glorious Head stands sponsor. They are his followers, they are his betrothed, they are his members; he is their Head and Representative and Ambassador; he intercedes, supplicates, prays for them, and their faith will fail not because they are his, because—however imperfect they may be as respects the flesh—at heart they are perfect, thoroughly loyal to him and to his cause, to their fellow-members.

So, then, we sound again the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our words, like the Master's, will fall on two classes —some will make light of the warning and expose themselves to danger; others will hearken to the warning of the Master's voice, and to them it will be a part of the power of God unto their preservation. —Z. '06:120.

◆

Don't mistake the **disorderly** for the weak, and **comfort them,** nor for the feeble-minded, and **support them;** but patiently, lovingly **warn** the disorderly. Whom does he call disorderly? There are many ways of walking disorderly. In 2 Thess. 3:11, he speaks of some who work not at all, but are busybodies, and says they should do as he did—work, that they be not chargeable to any; and if any will not work, neither should he eat. Thus he said he did, that he might be an example to others; and (verse 14), after you have warned such a one, if he "obey not, . . . note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. . . . Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." He warns us also against immoral and unjust persons, and those who wrest (twist) the Scriptures, and thus turn the truth of God into a lie. And the following citations clearly show that, in the Apostle's estimation, doctrinal disorders are among the chief.—2 Thes. 3:6-14; 1 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:6-11; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:8, 9; Titus 3:10.—Z. '93:269.

◆

Persecution serves to separate those whose interest is only lukewarm, and who, being unworthy of a place in the "little flock" to which it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, the Lord desires to separate. Besides, it serves to strengthen the true ones, thus fitting these "overcomers" more fully for the work of God, now and hereafter.—Z. '92:335.

◆

We are really nothing when compared with that which is perfect. Our standing with the Lord is not because of human perfection, but because of proper wills—good intentions,—**fully** consecrated hearts.—Z. '16:153.

◆

THUS MAY HE BLESS AND KEEP THEE

Numbers 6:24.

The Lord bless thee!
How shall he bless thee?
With the gladness that knoweth no decay;
With the riches that cannot pass away;
With the sunshine that makes an endless day—
Thus may he bless thee!

And keep thee!
How shall he keep thee?
With the all-covering shadow of his wings;
With the strong love that guards from evil things;
With the sure power that safe to glory brings—
Thus may he keep thee!—Z. '11:158.

Old Corn Gems

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The White Stone Given to Overcomers

"To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it."—Rev. 2:17.

IN ANCIENT TIMES the Greeks and the Romans had a custom of noting and perpetuating friendship by means of a **white stone.** This stone was divided into halves, and each person inscribed his name on the flat surface, after which the parts of the stone were exchanged. The production of either half was sufficient to insure friendly aid, even from the descendants of those who first divided the stone. A similar custom was sometimes observed by a king, who would break a white stone into two parts, one of which he would retain and the other part give to a special ambassador. That part could be sent to the king at any time and would insure aid. Thus the divided stone became a mark of identification.

Rev. 2:17 seems to refer to this ancient custom. The white stone signifies a precious token of the Lord's love, and the new name written in the stone suggests the Bridegroom's name. The statement indicates a special acquaintance with the great King of kings, secret between Himself and the individual. The overcomers are not to be recognized merely as a class—the Bride class—but each will have the personal favor of the Lord. Of this no one will know save himself and the King. There is an individual and personal relationship between the Lord and the overcomers, who may be said to receive the mark of identification—the antitypical white stone—**now,** in this life.

This mark is the sealing of the Holy Spirit by which the Lord identifies the overcomers. While this is said to be a part of the **final** reward of the Church, yet from the very beginning of our experience we have this personal acquaintance with the Lord. The full seal of the Holy Spirit will be given in the Resurrection, when we receive the new body. Then we shall have the complete knowledge of the name by which we shall be known to the Lord and He to us forever.—Z. '12:315.

Knowledge does not necessarily mean a great growth in spirituality. A mite of soap will make a very large air bubble; and so a comparatively little knowledge might puff one up greatly, without any solidity of character. There is, therefore, great advantage in measuring one's self by **growth in love** rather than by growth merely in **knowledge**—though, of course, to be great in **both** knowledge and love would be the **ideal condition.** The Apostle inculcates this same lesson, asserting, "Though I have all knowledge and have not love, I am nothing. —Z. '11:425.

◇

The more our courage and faithfulness to privilege and opportunity may cost us, the greater will be our reward, both in the present life and in that which is to come.—Z. '08:154.

◇

To be really in His service includes both the careful and continual study of God's Plan, and the imbibing of its spirit, leading to an enthusiastic zeal for its accomplishment, and to activity to the extent of ability in its service, whatever the cost or sacrifice it may require.

If faithful in this service we have neither time nor disposition to give heed to other themes having no bearing on the **one** thing to which we have solemnly dedicated our lives.—Z. '12:194.

◇

CHRIST.—Once in all history we meet a being who never did an injury, and never resented one done to him, never uttered an untruth, never practiced a deception, and never lost an opportunity of doing good; generous in the midst of the selfish, upright in the midst of the sensual, and wise far above the wisest of earth's sages and prophets, loving and gentle, yet immovably resolute; and whose illimitable meekness and patience never once forsook him in a vexatious, ungrateful, and cruel world.—Z. '92:254.

◇

It is one thing to make our consecration to the Lord, to be his and to serve him even unto death, and another thing to carry out that service day by day in all the little details of life. Our Lord's words—that he that is faithful in that which is least would be faithful also in greater things—is well illustrated by the fact that it would be comparatively easy for us to finish our sacrifice by suicide, or even by going to the stake, and a much more difficult thing to day by day hold our sacrifice on the altar in all the little affairs of life—in self-denials, in patience, in perseverance, in brotherly kindness, in gentleness—to receive reviling and revile not again, to be smitten mentally or physically and not to retaliate; this endurance of a lingering crucifixion-death is much more difficult.—Z. '07:179.

◇

Their falling will not be accidental but according to a definitely arranged plan. The trials will come in such manner as will serve to test and prove the faithful and wholly consecrated. God has provided in his Word an armament full and complete for all the truly consecrated; and those who are such will take heed; and if they take heed they "shall never fall," but receive an abundant entrance into the Kingdom.—2 Pet. 1:3-11; Z. '86, July 1.

◇

The fact is that the divine standard of righteousness is much higher than men generally understand: with God righteousness is synonymous with perfection.—Z. '98:104.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

"Lest We Forget!"

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."—Hebrews 12:14.

ALTHOUGH the Lord's people are counseled by the Lord's Word to be peacemakers, and to pursue peace, nevertheless they are forewarned that they must fight. On the surface these injunctions seem paradoxical. It seems strange that we should be admonished to be peacemakers and then be told that we are to fight. These conflicting statements may be harmonized however. If we are loyal to the Lord and to His cause, our loyalty will bring us into opposition with whatever is contrary to God. It is not that we are to strive with people; but the very fact that we are counseled to be peacemakers implies that there will be opposition.

How is it that when one wishes to do right and is doing this to the best of his ability he meets with opposition? It was so with our Master. Although He was perfect, yet He had opposition. We need not be surprised, then, if we who are imperfect should have similar experiences. What did Jesus do to cause people to do evil toward Him? He did only good and sought to bless all. His loyalty to the Father, however, made it a necessity for Him to rebuke sin and error. This brought upon Him the antagonism of those who upheld these sins and errors. The darkness hates the light because it is a constant rebuke to the darkness.

Then we not only have the opposition of the spirit of the world, but also the opposition of our own fallen flesh and the virulent opposition of the great Adversary and his hosts. What a power this all means! At one time in our lives we did not know what it meant to have the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil; but we are learning what this means, dear brethren. Our great Adversary is a very wily foe, and is on the alert to seize every opportunity to ensnare and entrap us, to put our enemies in antagonism against us, and to stir up all kinds of persecution and opposition. One might think that Satan would be satisfied to have taken the wrong course himself; and that he would ere now have been ready to say, "I have had enough of it." Why does he not say this? It is because he is so implacable a foe to God and to all that is good. He has so hardened his heart to all that is holy that he cannot be renewed to repentance, to change about and take an opposite course.

Let Us Take Warning From Satan's Course

What a solemn warning this should be to us to resist stoutly and unequivocally the very beginnings of sin, to resist the approach of temptation to be disloyal to God in the slightest degree, by hastening to the Throne of Grace in every time of danger? The Adversary's designs seem to be especially against the saints of God. He steadfastly opposes all those who desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, rather than those who walk according to the course of this world; for the latter are already more or less under his control. He does not seek to run after them or seek to entrap them. All he needs to do is to keep them from the light.—2 Cor. 4:4.

Satan does not wish the glorious light of God's goodness to shine into men's hearts; for wherever the light of Truth goes it brings a transformation. We become changed men and women as soon as the Truth shines into our hearts; and this transformation goes on day by day. When Satan sees this, he exerts all his power to blind the one who has gotten out from under his domination, and to weave his web around him again. When the fly begins to struggle to escape, the spider at once proceeds to strengthen the web around him. If the fly escapes the snare, the spider will again entrap him, if possible.

But in spite of the foes with which we have to contend, the foes without and within, we are perfectly safe so long as we keep close to the Master. Stronger and greater is He that is on our part than all they that are against us. We have learned something of the character of our Heavenly Friend. At first we saw that God was a great Being, deserving of our reverence; but now we are coming to see more and more how just He is, how wise He is, how loving and lovely He is. As we come to thus appreciate His glorious character, it inspires within us a great desire to be like Him, and we find that the injunction of Scripture is that we should be like our Father in Heaven. Jesus was like Him, and we are instructed to become copies of God's dear Son. "Be ye followers of us," said the Apostle, "even as we are followers of Christ."

Self Our Special Battle-Ground

We are now God's special representatives in the world, fighting a good fight of faith against sin and evil, especially in ourselves. We are not at all commissioned to clean up the world. The Bible gives us no such instructions. The Lord will use us to do this work by and by, when we reach the Kingdom. We cannot now quite get ahead of the evil that we find in our own flesh, and so we need to turn our forces against sin entrenched in our mortal bodies. We need to exercise great care lest, while we preach to others, we ourselves should become castaways. What a thought that is, that, after having told others about God, His love, His power and His salvation in Christ, we should ourselves become castaways from this glorious salvation!

As New Creatures we should be very vigilant, should continue to grow, should increase in power to overcome the flesh. Then we shall be safe. Self is to be our special battle-ground. Many of the Lord's people have a great deal of natural combativeness. This is a good trait if controlled and turned in the right direction. Combativeness is necessary, or we could never overcome. But we need to restrain ourselves that we do not fight the brethren; and we are not to enter into a personal combat with the Devil. We are no match for him. But we are to **resist** him. The Lord will soon take hold of him and bind him up for a thousand years. He will conquer the Adversary and will undo all his works. But it will require the entire thousand years to accomplish fully that work. We need not hope to overthrow Satan or his works while we are in the flesh. It is not our mission. What the Lord has given us to do is to **conquer ourselves,** to control this body which is of the fallen race of Adam, to keep ourselves that that Wicked One touch us not. —1 John 5:18.

We all have natural inclinations toward sin. It is necessary, therefore, that we overcome the inclinations of the flesh, the disposition of the flesh—all these things that war against the Spirit. From the moment that we surrendered ourselves to the Lord and were begotten of the Holy Spirit, we were New Creatures. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new. We no longer belong to the old family, the family of Adam; we are an entirely new creation. We have passed from death unto life, from condemnation to death in Adam to a new life in Christ. The continuation of this new life will depend upon our faithfulness as children of God. We must show our loyalty to the Lord by resisting everything that pertains to the old life.

Scriptural Encouragements to Come Often to God

None of us can fully do the things that we would. Some are more and some less fallen by nature. If we think we are succeeding fully, it is because we are more or less blind to our own deficiencies. We **would** do perfectly, but we **cannot.** But by fighting a good fight, we are to prove to the Lord that we are doing the best we can. We are not merely to make a little effort, but are to put forth **all our strength,** which will be supplemented by the grace of the Lord. If, then, in spite of **our best efforts** we come short, as we surely shall, what then? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Thus we are to continue "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." This does not mean that we are to keep from ever getting any spot or wrinkle upon our garments; for we could not avoid so doing. But God's wonderful arrangement is that we may come to Him and claim the merit of the blood of the Savior who died for us. We need not permit a spot or wrinkle to remain so as to blemish our glorious wedding robe. When we first came into the Father's family we received merit to cover all our **past sins;** but we have weaknesses and sins of the **present,** and we need the blood for these also. Thus the Lord has provided for our need. With this knowledge of the love of the Father and of our Lord Jesus, we are to come boldly—courageously—to the Throne of Heavenly Grace.

Some may feel that it is rather presumptuous to come thus to the Lord for continual cleansing from all earthly defilement, for the forgiveness of our daily unwitting transgressions. But we are instructed to the contrary by the Apostle. We need the encouragement of God's Word thus to come to the Lord to be forgiven. The flesh says, "Do not go very often to the Throne of Grace." When we first made a mistake it was comparatively easy to take it to the Lord. We came without much difficulty, or perhaps without any. We told the Lord that our transgression was not wilful, and that we were sorry; and we realized His forgiveness. But the second time it was not so easy; and it becomes more difficult the oftener we have to come, every time we sin. We told Him at first that we would try to be **more careful;** yet we continued perhaps to come short of the standard which we recognized. So we were tempted not to come to God with the matter.

Never Presume Upon God's Mercy

We all need to refresh our minds with the promises for our encouragement in continuing to come for mercy and grace to help in every time of need. Thus we are made stronger for the difficulties of the future. We are not, however, to presume upon the mercy of the Lord by becoming measurably careless as to our words and thoughts and deeds; for if the Lord sees anything of this spirit, He will not readily forgive us and restore us to favor. He will withhold the assurance of His forgiveness; and we may come to Him again and again before we realize the sense of His love and blessing. This will make us more careful not to be thus derelict another time.

The condition of those who fail to keep their record clean before the Lord is a very sad one. After the first or second offense they say to themselves, "I cannot go to the Lord again; I will go to sleep and forget it." They wake up in the morning out of harmony with God. But they think, "Well, I cannot help it." At night the thought that all is not right with the Lord comes again. "I know that I have had plenty of difficulties today and more failures; but I cannot go to God. It is of no use." So the breach widens. They forget the great mercy of the Lord. They forget that He has said, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."

This is a wrong course, fraught with extreme danger. We should clean up our accounts with the Lord every day. We should retire every night just as we should wish to do if we knew that we would not wake up in the flesh. In the morning before we arise our first thought should be, "How can I please the Lord today and be helpful to others, and especially how can I overcome myself?" Some who fail to take advantage of the grace offered for every time of need gradually get so far off from the Lord that by and by they scarcely think about it any longer. They have a reverence for God, but they do not love Him. He is not close to them, and they know it. They know the right way, but they feel that they cannot walk in it. They realize that they have spots on their robe, but they try to put the thought behind them. If this course continues, where will it end?

These are not the things to put behind us. The things that the Lord has **forgiven** should be put behind us; but the things for which we have not sought forgiveness should trouble us until they are settled. It is not a good plan to wait until evening to go to the Lord if we realize that we have displeased Him. If we can go to our closet at once, we should do so. If not, we might close our eyes for a moment and get into communication with our Father in Heaven through the merits of our Savior. Let us keep in constant touch with the Lord, and tell Him about all our affairs, our mistakes, our unwitting trespasses. There are probably many trespasses committed by us that we do not recognize. But daily application for the blood of cleansing will keep our garments clean and white.

Careless Ones Unfit For the Kingdom

Those who get spots upon their robes and leave them there will not be fit for the Kingdom of God; for the Bride of Christ will be composed of only those who will be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Jesus is to present this class blameless and unreprovable before the Father. They did not walk perfectly, without a blemish; but they were careful to keep their garments unspotted by going often to the Lord. They let nothing keep them away. This is the spirit of the Bride class. We each wish to be of that class, dear friends. If any of us are not sure just now as to our standing with the Lord, let us make haste to go to Him and see that the record is cleared by our dear Redeemer and Advocate. Let us not wait, but go at once.

The faithful class is pictured to us in Revelation 7:3, 4 and 14:1-5. These are the 144,000 who have the Father's name in their foreheads. They sing the new song, which none can sing but these 144,000. Oh, we long to be among them! We cannot afford to be anywhere else. . . . It will be **our own fault** if we miss the Kingdom. There will be no blame to attach to the Lord; for He has arranged for our continual cleansing day by day. His grace is provided for us at every step of the way; and His loving, protecting providences are continually about us if we are trustful and obedient to the best of our ability.

The other class who allow spots to accumulate upon their robes, is a "great multitude, whose number no man knoweth." (Revelation 7:9); that is, they are not of an ordained or **fixed number** as is the Bride class. These must through great tribulation wash their robes, all spotted and soiled, in the blood of the Lamb. These will then stand before the Throne, will serve God day and night in His Temple. The Bride class will be The Temple; or, in another figure, they will be seated upon the Messianic Throne with their Lord and Bridegroom. These different figures give different phases of the honored position and work of the Body of Christ in glory. These are spoken of as wearing crowns, the others as merely carrying palm branches, indicating final victory.

How glad we are that our dear Heavenly Father has mercifully provided for those who through lack of sufficient zeal and faithfulness lose the "Prize of the High Calling"! We rejoice that even the "foolish virgins" do not lose all, but will through tears and travail of soul yet come wholly back to the Lord. They will finish their course in death. Theirs is an enforced destruction of the flesh. Although they covenanted to sacrifice it willingly yet they failed to do so. They love the Lord and love righteousness, but not sufficiently to be thoroughly loyal and faithful; and so they must be severely scourged, that their spirits may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

Earnest Exhortation to Faithfulness

No one has been called of God to the Great Company class. "We are all called in one hope of our calling." Let us then walk with the Lord in white every day, dear brethren and sisters. Let us keep our robes spotless. It is easier to get spots on them than to get the spots off, and each spot will be more difficult than the previous one. We understand spots to be the result of a measure of carelessness. "It is impossible for me to keep my robe from ever getting spotted," you say, "but I am very thankful that the Lord has provided a way whereby the spots may be removed when I earnestly apply for the cleansing."

Each experience of this kind should make us more humble, more careful, more alive to our weaknesses and more watchful to avoid getting spots on our white robes. Otherwise the Lord will chastise us by withholding for a time His peace, lest we think that we may be careless, and then may have the spot removed without any trouble. The Lord wishes us to realize that this is no light matter. Then let us each be very faithful, that we may soon hear the Master's sweet "Well done!"—Z. '16-211-213.

Taking God's Name in Vain

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."—Exod. 20:7.

WHILE it is true, as the Apostle Paul states (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15), that the hand-writing of the ordinances or decrees of the Jewish law, which was found to be only unto death, was taken away by the vicarious sacrifice of Christ Jesus, so that there is now no condemnation to them that are in him, by faith in his blood, and also that the ceremonial or typical features of the law, having been fulfilled, have likewise passed away (Rom. 8:1; Matt. 5:18), it is nevertheless true that the moral precepts of that law never have passed away, and never will, because they are parts of the eternal law of right.

Among these precepts is the above, generally known as the second commandment—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." It behooves us, therefore, to consider what the Lord would esteem as a vain use of his name. The expression, "in vain," signifies falsely, or, to no purpose; and, it will be seen, is a finer distinction of irreverence than either profanity or blasphemy. To profane the name of God is to use it with disrespect and irreverence; and to blaspheme his name is to revile, calumniate, reproach and abuse it. While, therefore, it is unquestionably wrong to either profane or abuse the holy name of our God, those also who in a milder sense take it in vain, are, we are assured, not held guiltless.

"Behold," says the Psalmist (51:6), "thou desirest truth in the inward parts"—in the heart; and the Apostle Paul exhorts, saying, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ [Jehovah's representative] depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2:19.) "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes [laws], or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son."—Psa. 50:16-20.

The prophet Isaiah (29:13) prophesied of such a class; and alas, many have arisen in fulfilment of his words. Our Lord applied the prophecy to some in his day, saying, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—Matt. 15:8, 9.

Seeing with what aversion the Lord regards anything short of simple candor and honesty of heart in those who claim to be Christians or children of God, with what carefulness should we take upon us his worthy name! In claiming to be the divinely recognized children of God and followers of his dear Son, we stand before the world as God's representatives, and, presumably, all our words and actions are in harmony with his indwelling spirit. We stand as guideposts in the midst of the world's dark and uncertain way; and if we are not true to our professions we are deceitful sign-boards causing the inquirer to lose the right way and to stumble into many a snare. To take the name of God, then, claiming to be his sons, and Christians, or followers of Christ, without a fixed determination and careful effort to fairly represent him is a sin against God, of which none who do so will be held guiltless.

"Let every one," therefore, "that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says the Psalmist, "the Lord will not hear me." (Psa. 66:18.) To undertake the Christian life is to engage in a great warfare against iniquity; for, though the grace of God abounds to us through Christ to such an extent that our imperfections and shortcomings are not imputed to us, but robed in Christ's imputed righteousness we are reckoned holy and acceptable to God, we are not, says the Apostle (Rom. 6:1, 2), to continue in sin that grace may abound; for by our covenant with God we have declared ourselves dead to sin and that we have no longer any desire to live therein. But having made such a covenant with God and taken upon us his holy name, if we continue in sin or cease to strive against sin, we are proving false to our profession.

"Shall we," then, "who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" God forbid. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, but reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Rom. 6:1, 2, 11, 12.) This means a great deal. It means a constant warfare against the easily besetting sins of our old nature; and the struggle will be long and constant until the power of sin is broken; and then only constant vigilance will keep it down. A Christian, therefore, who is true to his profession is one who daily strives to realize an increasing mastery over sin in himself, and who, therefore, is able from time to time to distinguish some degree of advancement in this direction. He grows more Christ-like—more self-possessed, more meek and gentle, more disciplined and refined, more temperate in all things, and more fully possessed of the mind that was in Christ Jesus. The old tempers and unlovely dispositions disappear, and the new mind asserts its presence and power. And thus the silent example of a holy life reflects honor upon that holy name which it is our privilege to bear and to represent before the world—as living epistles, known and read of all men with whom we come in contact.

The formation of such a noble and pure character is the legitimate result of the reception of divine truth into a good and honest heart. Or, rather, such is the transforming power of divine truth upon the whole character when it is heartily received and fully submitted to. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," was the Lord's petition on our behalf: and let none of the faithful fall into the error of some—of presuming that the sanctifying work can go on better without the truth than with it. We need the instruction and guidance and inspiration of the truth for holy living; and our Lord's words imply that all the truth that is necessary to this end is in the Word of God, and that consequently we are not to look for any further revelations through visions or dreams or imaginations of ourselves or others. The Word of God, says the Apostle (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

It reveals to us the spirit, mind or disposition of God, and exhorts us to let the same mind dwell richly in us; and, in conjunction with the study of the mind of God as revealed in his Word and communion with him in prayer, we receive the blessed influences of his spirit, which bring us more and more into conformity with his perfect will. To live a holy life is not to do some great and wonderful things: it is only to live from day to day a life of quiet unostentatious conformity to the will of God, of secret communion with him in our closet devotions and daily walk, and of zealous activity to the extent of our ability and opportunity in his service. There is in reality no such thing as the "wonderful piety," the "eminent piety," or the "wonderful faith" of which we often hear and read. There is nothing wonderful about piety: we ought to be pious. Why not? And when our piety becomes "eminent," let us beware of self-righteousness and sanctimonious vain-glory. Neither is there anything wonderful about a clear and steady faith and confident trust in the sure promises of God. Why should we not have faith sufficiently sure and strong? The Christian who bears the strongest testimony for God is the one whose faith is just simple enough to take him at his word, and whose piety consists simply in reverent and loyal obedience to the will of God and in the faithful study of his will, with a view to personal conformity to it. Such need not hesitate to take the name of God—to declare themselves the children of God, and Christians or followers of Christ, and to openly profess that thus they are daily submitting themselves to God to be led of his Spirit.

But let us beware of the error of those whom the Psalmist in the above words describes as "wicked"—who bear the name of Christ in vain, who claim to be God's children and to be led of his spirit, but whose actions show that they hate instruction and cast the words of the Lord behind them—who make common cause with the "thieves and robbers" who are striving to teach men to climb up to life by some other way than that of God's appointment, and whose whole course is in opposition to God and his truth while they proclaim themselves his representatives and ambassadors. Let us indeed beware of such a lamentable condition—of so taking the name of God "in vain." And let all such hear the solemn inquiry and accusation of our great Judge—"What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" etc. The words of our text assure us that such shall not be held guiltless. Nor will those be who in any way become the aids or abettors of these: for if we consent with "thieves" and become partakers with "adulterers," we shall surely share their reward of divine indignation.

The Lord would have his people separate and distinct from all such, and would not have them fellowship or aid them in any way. He does not own them, and would not have us bid them God speed. Nor would he encourage them to bear his name, to assemble with his people for prayer and praise, or to pose as his ambassadors of truth. The only proper course for such to pursue is to repeat their first works—to repent and turn humbly to God and to heed his instruction.

When we thoughtfully consider what it is to take the name of God in vain, we are overwhelmed with the thought of how many are doing it. Few indeed are applying their hearts unto instruction, yet, without the least hesitation, multitudes are taking the name of God and of Christ in vain. Some do so recklessly because it is customary among respectable people—because Christ's name is a passport of some value in social and business life. Others assume the name as a cloak for false doctrines. . . . And what gross and hideous doctrines have not shielded themselves under the name Christian, vainly taken? "In vain they do worship me," saith the Lord, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9.) Therefore, let all that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity and apply their hearts unto instruction, and verily they shall be led of God in green pastures and beside still waters—their table will be richly and bountifully spread, and their cup of blessing and joy and gladness will overflow; while the wrath of God will in due time be revealed against all who take his hallowed name in vain, however they may band themselves together, and however loudly they may proclaim themselves heaven's appointed messengers.

"'Not my own!' my time, my talent,
Freely all to Christ I bring,
To be used in joyful service
For the glory of my King."

—Z. '93:147-149.

The Ransom and the Sin-Offering

NOTWITHSTANDING all that we have written on the subjects of the Ransom and the Sin-Offering in the Studies in the Scriptures, in The Watch Tower and in the Tabernacle Shadows, it would appear that some of our dear readers are not yet clear in respect to these matters. Some even confuse themselves and others by hinting that "Brother Russell has changed his views—or that the Studies in the Scriptures contradict The Watch Tower. These are harmful mistakes. Should our

views change we will state the change in no uncertain terms. We therefore make a renewed effort to make plain what we believe to be the proper interpretation of these subjects.

"The Ransom-Price relates to the valuable thing itself: namely, the blood or death of Christ—a ransom price sufficient for the payment of the penalty of one member of the human family or of all, as it may be applied."—Z. '09, p. 309.

The Ransom views the matter of man's recovery from sin and death as a purchase—a Redemption. The basis of this thought is the Divine Law, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man's life for a man's life." (Deuteronomy 19:21.) Adam and his entire race of thousands of millions are in dire distress through sin and its penalty. God has provided a recovery by a Ransom process—purchasing back from their fallen condition.

Our first thought naturally would be that to redeem, or purchase back, the right of humanity to life, would mean that each member of Adam's race must be purchased by the life of another person, holy, harmless, unsentenced. But looking deeply into God's Plan we find that only one man was tried before the Divine Court—namely, Father Adam: that only Adam was sentenced to death; and that all of his children go into death, not because of their individual trial and death, but simply because Adam, having failed to maintain his perfection, was unable to give his children more life or rights than he possessed. And so it has been throughout the entire period of six thousand years from the time of Father Adam's sentence until now.

Here we see a wonderful economic feature connected with the Divine Plan. God would not permit more than one member of the human race to be tried and sentenced to death; for His purpose from the beginning was that the sacrifice of one life should redeem the entire human race. By **one man** the whole trouble came; by **another Man** the whole trouble will be rectified. This the Apostle points out, saying, "As by a man came death, by a man comes also the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive—every man in his own order."—1 Corinthians 15:21-23.

Thus we see the value of Jesus' death—that it was not merely for Adam, but included **all his posterity.** We see, too, how necessary it was that Jesus should be "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners"; otherwise, He, like the remainder of the race, would have been under a Divine death sentence. Because all of Adam's race were involved in sin and its penalty it was necessary to find an **outsider** to be the world's Redeemer; and that outsider, whether angel, cherub, or the great Michael Himself, the Logos, must exchange the spirit nature for the human nature in order to be a **corresponding price**—a Ransom for the first **man.**

It was not a God that sinned; hence the death of a God could not redeem. It was not a cherub that sinned; hence the death of a cherub could not redeem. It was a **man** who sinned, and the ransom for him must be furnished by the death of a **man.** It was for this cause that the great Logos, in carrying out the Divine Plan for human redemption, left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, humbled Himself and became a **man,** "was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [the perfection of human nature]; that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."—Hebrews 2:9.

Ransom Price and Ransom Work

If we have established clearly what a ransom is, and that Jesus was the only One suitable to be a Ransom for Father Adam, our next point is to show from the Bible that He did give Himself as a Ransom. We have the word of Jesus Himself on the subject (Matthew 20:28); and also St. Paul's testimony, "the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom-price for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:6.) This proves that the giving of the price sufficient to ransom Adam and all his race was accomplished in Jesus' death at Calvary.

But the work of ransoming Adam and his race is much more than merely the providing of the Ransom-price. The thought connected with the word Ransom goes beyond the mere giving and appropriating of the price. It includes the **recovery** of Adam and his race from the **power of sin and death.** Manifestly, this work has not yet been accomplished; indeed, it has scarcely begun. The only disposition thus far of the Ransom, the merit, has been its imputation to the Church, and this only by faith. The Church is not yet glorified as a whole—not yet delivered from the power of sin and death completely. Manifestly, then, it will require the entire thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom to ransom, to deliver, to set free, from the power of sin and death, Adam and all his children. Consequently, the Ransom work, which began more than eighteen centuries ago, is still to be accomplished.

There is no difficulty about the Ransom-price; for that price has been in the hands of Justice for nearly nineteen centuries. But it has been unapplied as respects the world and only imputed to the Church that has been called out from the world during this Gospel Age. The full completion of the Ransoming work will include what the Bible speaks of, saying, "I will ransom them from the **power of the grave."** (Hosea 13:14.) Nor will the Ransoming work be fully accomplished when the last member of the race has been delivered from the power of the grave; for there will still be a great resurrecting work to be done—a raising up out of imperfection of mind, morals and physique, to the full image and likeness of God, lost through Adam's disobedience and redeemed by the precious blood at Calvary.

The Sin-Offering Is Different

With the thought of the Ransom before our minds, we now investigate the subject of the Sin-Offering, remembering to keep the two subjects separate and distinct. "The Sin-Offering shows the manner in which the Ransom-price is applicable, or effective, to the cancelation of the sins of the whole world." (Z. '09:309.) The Sin-Offering does not require so long a time for its accomplishment as does the Ransom. We have already seen that the Ransoming work has been in progress nearly nineteen centuries, and will be in progress nearly ten centuries in the future, or a total of twenty-nine centuries. But the Sin-Offering will all be completed before the glorious Reign of Christ begins, His Church then being with Him in glory.

The Sin-Offering of Israel's Atonement Day shows us the same sacrifice of Jesus which constitutes the Ransom-price, but it is a different picture; for it shows how God appropriates the merit of Christ in behalf of human sins. This matter was pictured in that feature of the Law which provided the Day of Atonement. The sin-offerings were its principal feature. There were two. First was the bullock of sin-offering, which was furnished by the priest himself, the blood of which was made applicable to the priest's own family and tribe. This we see represented the death of Jesus, and the primary imputation of His merit to the Church of the First-borns.

This Church consists of two classes. First, is the priestly class, who, like the High Priest, are especially devoted to God and His service, who "present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, their reasonable service." (Romans 12:1.) In the type these were pictured both by Aaron's sons and by the body of Aaron, he being the head. Thus the Apostle speaks of Christ as being the Head of the Church, which is His Body, we being "members in particular of the Body of Christ."—1 Corinthians 12:27.

Second, there is the other class of the Church which, although making the same Covenant of Sacrifice, fail to go on obediently to lay down their lives in the Lord's service. They do not draw back to sin and to death, but neither do they go on to the sacrificing stage: hence they constitute a secondary class, servants of the first class. These were typified in the Levites, who were the servants of the priests. These are not to be in the Throne with the sacrificing Priests, the Royal Priesthood, but are to serve God in His Temple. They are not to have the crowns of Glory, but will be granted eventually palms of victory. And all not found worthy of a place in either of these classes will die the Second Death.

In this picture the Lord shows us a special imputation of the merit of Jesus for the sins of His consecrated people only; and that these, justified by the merit of Jesus, are thus qualified through His merit to be sharers with Him in His glorious priestly functions.

The Secondary Sin-Offering

The secondary Sin-Offering of the typical Atonement Day was called the Lord's Goat. It was not provided by the typical High Priest, as was the bullock, but was taken from the people. Indeed, two goats were taken at the same time, as representing the two classes of the Church. The sacrificing class or priestly class were represented by the Lord's goat. The less zealous of the Church, the antitypical Levites, were represented in the second goat—the Scape Goat. It was the Lord's Goat class, the under priesthood, that constituted the secondary Sin-Offering.

The account says that the Lord's Goat was sacrificed and was in every way dealt with in precisely the same manner as the bullock, which preceded it. Thus the type tells us that the Church must walk in the footsteps of her Lord, sacrificially even unto death. We should remember that the blood of the bullock was not applied for the sins of the **people**, but merely for the sins of the high priest's family and tribe—typically for the Church. We should also notice that this secondary Sin-Offering, the Lord's Goat, was not offered for the same persons; for they needed no further offering. It was offered by the high priest as a secondary part of his own original offering; and its merit was made applicable to all the people, to bring atonement to all.

In the antitype, the High Priest, Jesus, completed His own personal Sacrifice at Calvary. Forty days later He ascended up on High, and appeared before the Mercy Seat and presented the merit of His Sacrifice, not for the world, but for the Church. As the Apostle writes, "He appeared in the presence of God for **us**," the Church—not for the world. (Hebrews 9:24.) This is in full accord with what we have just seen in the type.

Ever since Pentecost the Lord has been accepting the consecrated persons represented in the two goats; and those sufficiently zealous He has accepted as His members, and has been offering them up as a part of His own Sacrifice. Soon He will have finished this work—when the last member of His Body shall have been found faithful unto death. The next step in the antitype will be for the High Priest then to present again at the Mercy Seat the blood of the antitypical Lord's Goat as His own blood—otherwise, the sacrifice of His Church as part of His own Sacrifice. This He makes applicable to the sin of all the people—the **original** sin of all the people.

At that moment, which we believe is in the near future now, the Father will turn over to the Son all the people, their sins fully forgiven so far as the original transgression is concerned. Forthwith Messiah's Kingdom, established in power and great glory, will begin to deal with the world for its rescue from sin and death, for the ultimate uplift to human perfection of all who are willing and obedient to the regulations of His Kingdom.

Punishment For Sins Against Light

Meantime, there will be other sins of the world not included in the Adamic transgression. The Sin-Offerings are merely for Adam's sin and all the various weaknesses and imperfections which flow from that original sin. The other sins will be such as are not to be attributed to human weakness, but which represent more or less of sin against knowledge, against light. Full, wilful sin against full light would bring upon the sinner the Second Death. But only a few have had full light, full knowledge, full opportunity; and hence very few indeed will have sinned the sin unto death.

Wherever the light of the Gospel has gone, however, a certain measure of knowledge has gone, and a certain measure of responsibility accrues; and God intimates that He keeps a very exact accounting with all. Every sin must receive a just recompense of reward. The penalty of Adam's sin has reached down in a general way over the whole race for six thousand years; but the penalty must be paid for the other sins of which we speak, sins which were more or less wilful, more or less against light and knowledge and which have not been previously expiated, but which have been accumulating since Pentecost.

Before the New Dispensation can rightly be ushered in with all its blessings, the world's accounts must be fully squared. It will be the settlement of these accounts against the world which will bring the great Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation—the Time of Trouble which we believe has begun in the war, and which will progress until the great catastrophe of anarchy will complete it in the near future. Then the accounts of Justice having been squared in that great Time of Trouble, the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom will immediately begin.

The Value of the Scape Goat's Suffering

However, God is a very strict Accountant. As He is sure to count against the world all wilful disobedience, and especially all persecutions of His Church, so also He is willing to give the world credit on account wherever possible. This, we believe, is intimated in the picture given us of a work which followed the Sin-Offerings; namely, the confessing over the head of the scape goat certain transgressions of the people, and the sending away of the scape goat into the wilderness.

Understanding that this scape goat represents some of God's consecrated people who have failed to live up to their privileges, we understand this to signify that these will go into a great Time of Trouble, as represented in Revelation 7:14. There they are represented as coming up out of great tribulation and washing their robes and making them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Those tribulations coming upon the Great Company class, the Levite class, are not tribulations for wilful sins, but tribulations for the destruction of the flesh, in harmony with the Covenant entered into by this class, a Covenant of Sacrifice, which they failed to keep. The sufferings of this Great Company class, we understand, therefore, go as a credit to the world to square the account of the world's sins against light and especially against God's people. The Time of Trouble will be especially against the hypocrites, but the Great Company Class will have their portion with the hypocrites and be bearers of a certain share of punishment due the world.

That we may clearly note the character of sins for which the world is held responsible, let us recall the statement of Rev. 6:9-11, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? and white robes were given unto them"; and they were told that they should wait "a little season," until their brethren, who also were persecuted, should have the persecutions accomplished in them.

Thus the same idea respecting the Divine requirements in the end of the Gospel Age is given to us that Jesus specified in regard to the Jews in the end of their Age. He said that all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the time of Abel down, would be required of that generation—to square the accounts. (Matthew 23:34-36.) In the great time of trouble with which the Jewish Age ended, those accounts were squared up to that time. Similarly we expect that all the remaining accounts of the world will be squared during the culmination of the great Time of Trouble—just before us.

The Inauguration of the New Covenant

The Apostle, in contrasting the typical and the anti-typical Sin-Offering, declares that Jesus, not by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by His own blood, accomplishes the blessings. (Hebrews 9:11-15.) And again, the sacrifices of the antitypical High Priest are styled the "better sacrifices"—in the plural. This points us back to the institution of the Jewish Covenant arrangement, where Moses took the blood of bulls and goats and inaugurated the Law Covenant, sprinkling first the Tables of the Law, and afterwards the people, with the blood.—Exod. 24:3-8.

The question arises, Why did Moses use the blood of bulls—plural—and of goats—plural; whereas in the type of Leviticus 16 the blood of one bullock and the blood of one goat alone was used? We reply that there was really but the one anti-typical bullock, the one Man Christ Jesus who died for us; and that there is really but one anti-typical Goat, the one Church, which is accepted by the Lord as His Body, and is associated with, and part of, His sacrifice. But in the inauguration of the Law Covenant, more than one animal of each kind was necessary because of the multitudes of the people of Israel who were to be sprinkled with that blood. The blood of one bullock and of one goat would not have been sufficient; hence the statement bulls and goats—in the plural—and yet not definitely stated as to how many; for it was really the one bullock and the one goat duplicated as many times as was necessary to provide a sufficiency of blood for the sprinkling of all the people.

In the antitype, when the New Law Covenant will be inaugurated by Messiah's Kingdom, the blood of Christ, as represented in the blood of Jesus and also in that of His associated sacrifices, the Church, will be used in sprinkling, or satisfying the Divine Law, first of all. This will be the basis for the turning over, to the Kingdom of Messiah, of the whole world by the Father. Then will progress the work of sprinkling all the people with the blood—the work of cleansing mankind—giving all men the benefits secured by the redeeming blood.

The Antitypical Atonement Day

We trust that from the foregoing our readers will see clearly the distinction between the **Ransom** which Jesus gave and its **application**; and the **Sin-Offerings** of this Gospel Age and **what they signify.** We wish now to impress a further point; namely, that the Sin-Offerings were associated with the Day of Atonement for sin in the **type** and in the antitype. The antitypical Day of Atonement began with our Lord Jesus and His sacrifices. The entire Gospel Age has been a part of this Day of Atonement. This Day will witness the full completion of all the sin atonement and more; for all of the Millennial Age will be a part of the antitypical Atonement Day.

The sacrifices of the Day of Atonement are merely the means to an end. The end to be attained is the blessing of the world, and the bringing of the world back to at-one-ment, or harmony, with God.

That work will require all of the Millennial Age. It will include the teaching of the world, the restoration of mankind to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed at Calvary. The Sin-Offerings of the Atonement Day merely represent God's Purpose in the use of the Sacrifices which must be completed before the world's at-one-ment with God can begin to go into effect.

So, then, let us hope that all will henceforth see clearly that the Sin-Offerings of the Atonement Day and its Sacrifices constitute a picture of the processes by which God accomplishes the world's blessings; while the **Ransom** is entirely distinct, and shows the work of Jesus alone and its ultimate effect for mankind throughout the whole wide world.—Z. '16: 87-90.

Gideon

Judges 7:13-23.

Golden Text:—"Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."—Psa. 27:3.

GIDEON was one of the judges of Israel raised up by the Lord. He delivered his people from the Midianites who had invaded Palestine and taken possession of its most fertile part, pillaging the country of its produce. Under God's special covenant with Israel we know that he would have protected them from these invaders had they remained faithful to him. We are not surprised, therefore, that the narrative shows that the Israelites at this time had succumbed to the idolatrous influences of the Canaanites who still dwelt in the land. Gideon's father was one of the chief men of his tribe and district, and upon his plantation he had erected a statue to Baal in the midst of a consecrated grove, on a hilltop. Notwithstanding this established idolatry in the home, Gideon appears to have had considerable knowledge of the true God and of the deliverances effected by him for his people in the past, and when conversing with his angel visitor he shows not only his knowledge of the Lord's dealings in the past, but his surprise that the Lord had ceased to care for his people. It did not even seem to occur to him that the Lord's disfavor, as manifested in the successes of the Midianites against Israel, was on account of Israel's disloyalty to the Lord in idolatry, etc. It is probable that this same sentiment pervaded the nation in general and that, in some sense of the word, they respected Jehovah at the same time they worshiped Baal also.

God's favors to Spiritual Israel and his protection are along spiritual lines against spiritual enemies and spiritual difficulties; and yet how few Spiritual Israelites when they get into spiritual difficulties realize that it must, in some sense of the word, be traceable to the Lord's providences! How few of them properly look to see to what extent their spiritual adversities, weaknesses, coldness, alienation from the Lord, etc., are due to the permission of some kind of idolatry in their hearts! Not an idolatry, probably, that entirely ignores the Lord; but one which, while thinking favorably of his spiritual blessings and victories of the past, simply wonders at his disfavor of the present, and fails to recognize that it is impossible to serve at the same time both God and Mammon; that God's favor and close communion and protection can not be expected while we permit in our hearts a rival reverence for wealth or fame or human institutions and creeds, or self or family to any degree or extent.

Evidently the Lord saw that the Israelites were at this time ripe for a change—that under the adversities inflicted through their enemies they were humbled to such an extent that they would be ready to see where was their fault, and to turn from idolatry again to the Lord. But the Lord wished an agent for his service, and instead of using a supernatural one—an angel—he chose, as usual, to use a man. And he chose, as usual, to use a suitable man, fit for the purpose. Gideon seems to have been a man of middle age, for he had a son at this time of probably fifteen years of age; he was well born, as is implied by the record that he was fine of form and feature.

True, the adage is, "Handsome is that handsome does"; it is true, too, that some who are handsome fail to measure up to their appearance in the conduct of life; nevertheless, it is beyond question that to those who can read character, the face and form, unless marred by accident indicate the character and the training. The noble, the brave, the generous, the wise, by nature, by birth, show these qualities in feature and form; nevertheless God is not always able to use as his servants the naturally noblest and finest of the human family. Too frequently with such nobility goes a spirit of pride and self-conceit, which renders the individual unsuited to the Lord's purposes of the present time, when humility and obedience to the Lord are the prime essentials. The Apostle noted this, saying that not many wise, not many noble, not many learned hath God chosen, but the weak things and the ignoble things—rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 1:26.) How gracious is this arrangement which opens the way to the highest divine favor for the humblest who hears the voice of the Lord and responds with humility and zeal! Let the ignoble, then, who have tasted of the Lord's grace, be encouraged to trust that, even though ignoble by nature, the grace of the Lord is able to work in them such a transformation of character that they may in heart, at least, become copies of God's dear Son, and thus be prepared for the finishing touches of our promised "change" in the First Resurrection.

As Gideon's band may be considered a figure or illustration of the overcomers of this Gospel Age—the Church, the little flock—so Gideon himself would fitly represent the Captain of our salvation, whose example we are to follow, and whose character is to impress all his followers. Of Gideon it is declared that he looked like the king's son—that in appearance, form, etc., he had a nobility which marked him as above the ordinary rank and file. So our Lord Jesus is the King's Son, and so all whom he accepts to be of the little band, his little flock, are to be conformed to his image by the power of God, working in them "to will and do of his good pleasure"; working in them through a knowledge of the truth:—the knowledge of the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. Whatever they are by nature, it is God's design that eventually they shall be like their Lord and Captain, see him as he is and share his glory, honor and immortality.

After receiving the Lord's invitation to be the deliverer of his people, Gideon also received a test; he was to hew down the trees constituting the grove of Baal and was to overthrow the statue and was to offer to the Lord sacrifices upon a rock, using the wood from Baal's grove and image as the fuel. Sure that he was following the Lord's command, he did not wait to gain even the consent of his father, much less that of his people in that vicinity, who he knew would be greatly incensed by such a procedure. Assuring himself that his commands were of the Lord, he hesitated not one moment, but accomplished the destruction and made the offering, doing the work by night, knowing it would be interrupted by the people if done in the day time. The citizens of his clan demanded his life, appealing the matter to his father, who evidently was a chief amongst them; but the wise decision of the father was that if Baal could not defend himself against his son, there was certainly no need of any one taking up the cause of Baal.

Thus the Lord protected the one whom he had chosen for his servant, and brought him more markedly than ever before the attention of the people, so that when he sent out invitations for volunteers from various quarters, an army of thirty-odd thousand assembled to his standard. But the Lord said to Gideon that there were too many, and that all were not of the kind desired. From the human standpoint the thirty-two thousand of Israel had no show of conquering the hundred and thirty-five thousand of their enemies (Judges 8:10); but from the standpoint of faith in God, who called them to this service, victory was certain, though none could foresee in what way it should be brought about.

The Lord had in mind a glorious victory, but it was to be achieved by his might and power alone. The honor due to the human instruments who were privileged to share in it was not to be in their skill and strength in battle, but in their faith in God and in their zeal in obeying his orders, as an evidence of the strength of their confidence in God.

Then the Lord commanded Gideon to prove them. Gideon's army had a chance to see the hosts of the enemy; they had a chance to consider that their enemies were used to warfare while they, as a people had for now a long time been accustomed to the peaceable pursuits of agriculture. Accordingly, the first test of faith applied was permission for all the fearful to return home. This reduced the army to ten thousand; yet many if not all of these who first volunteered, but were now rejected, probably had an opportunity a little later on of joining in the battle after the Midianites had been discomfited and were in full retreat. But the ten thousand courageous men, fearless in the presence of an enemy many times their own strength, must have been men of faith in the Lord, men who, in some respects at least, resembled Gideon in their hearts, in their courage, in their trust in Jehovah; nevertheless there were still too many for the Lord's purpose. The next test was a test of zeal. When led down to the brook to drink, all but three hundred halted very leisurely and knelt down to drink, which required the loosening of their armor and unfastening of their swords. But three hundred did not stop to do this, but hastily scooped up a little water and lapped it from their hands. This zeal, inspired by a living faith in God, was just the element of character for which the Lord was looking; and these three hundred "peculiar people," full of faith and active zeal, were the only ones acceptable to God and privileged to share the honors of delivering Israel from a mighty host of oppressors.

Just so the Lord Jehovah contemplates the conquest of the world for Christ (Zech. 14:3); and Christ, like Gideon, is called of God to lead a "little flock" of "called and faithful and chosen" ones (Rev. 17:14) forth to the conquest of the hosts of sin. The selection of Gideon's army was an illustration of the Lord's method in the selection of a "peculiar people" who will share with him the honors of victory in the conquest of sin and all its defiling host.

Of these there is first a call to faith in the Lord, resulting in justification and acceptance; secondly, there is a call to consecration, in full view of the requirements, in full view of the enemy, and our Captain requests all of the justified ones who come to him to sit down first and count the cost, whether or not they are willing to sacrifice their all under his leadership. The large majority, when they come to see the cost, to realize the battle that must be waged between the followers of the Lord and the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil, are rather inclined to say, We prefer not to engage in battle, we are timid, we are fearful, we have not sufficient confidence either in Gideon or in Gideon's God. It is in accord with the Lord's will that such should be considered separate from God's army, though they may have subsequently an opportunity for joining in the battle against evil.

It is not sufficient that we should have faith in the Lord and in the Captain of our salvation and should make our consecration to the Lord's will; but further tests are made with a view to making a final selection of a very special class to constitute the little flock. It will be a test of water—symbolizing the truth. It becomes a very important question to every consecrated one as he is brought to a knowledge of the truth how he will receive it—appropriate it. In the picture or type those accepted of God to be Gideon's little flock used their hands to lift the water to their mouths, a sup at a time, as a dog uses his tongue to lift the water; while the others drank like as a horse who puts his mouth into the water and sucks it. The hand is a symbol of energy, and we might understand this to signify that the persons most approved of the Lord will use energy and discretion in partaking of the truth—

these will not bow down in the mire of human servility, but will maintain their own erectness of manhood and will partake of the water of truth, lifting their heads upward and acknowledging its heavenly origin by whatever stream or channel it may come to them.—Z. '07: 327-331.

"Always For All Things"

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."—Eph. 5:15-21.

FROM the contrast here instituted between being drunken with wine and being filled with the Spirit, as well as from the fact that Christians and not worldlings are here addressed, we understand the wine to be used as a symbol of the spirit of the world. And the Apostle here warns the children of God not to become intoxicated with the spirit of the world, but counsels us, on the contrary, to be filled with the Spirit of God. It is not enough that we banish from our hearts the spirit of the world, but we must keep filled with the holy Spirit of God, else the spirit of the world will come in unsolicited and take possession.

The spirit of the world—the disposition and sentiments of the world on every subject—we find all about us, and the inclination of our natural mind is in the same direction: it is the mind of the flesh, the carnal mind, the selfish mind. To partake largely of this mind or disposition is to become intoxicated with it: and this intoxication stupefies the spiritual senses and beclouds the reasoning faculties, and so greatly mystifies the vision of truth that its clear discernment is impossible. But the spirit of Christ has the very opposite effect: it is the spirit of love and of a sound mind, whose healthful tendency is to illuminate the understanding and to invigorate every noble faculty of the soul.

The effect of such spiritual invigoration and illumination is that of joy and peace and praise; and when two or three such meet their hearts naturally flow together: and while they make melody in their hearts together to the Lord, they often delight to express themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and in prayers of thanksgiving to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor do such ever find themselves so beset with the cares and vexations of the present life that they can find no cause for thanksgiving; for, being graciously enlightened by the spirit of God, they know that **all things,** however vexing or perplexing or trying they may be, are working together for good to them that love God—to the called according to his purpose; and therefore it is their privilege to rejoice at all times and under all circumstances, and their pleasure **always** to give thanks to God for **all things.** . . .

While the world marks and rejoices in, and in some cases returns thanks to God for, the truly glorious **common blessings** which our loving and benevolent Father showers alike upon the evil and the just, let our hearts not only rejoice in these things, but also in the higher spiritual favors bestowed upon the sons of God, giving thanks always and for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Truly this is a happy frame of mind to be in, and those who can do this **at all times and under all circumstances** have reached an enviable altitude of Christian character and experience. All about us are trials and vexations on every hand, and the man or woman who has become so superior to these that he takes cognizance only of the end to be gained by this refining process, and who therefore patiently and even thankfully submits to the painful ordeals in hope of the glorious end designed by Divine Providence, may also confidently rejoice in hope of the final reward of the overcomers.

Along with this beautiful frame of mind produced by the indwelling spirit of God, the Apostle also links the grace of humility or submission—"submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Where the spirit of joy and thankfulness reigns pride finds no place, but each, in lowliness of mind and in the fear of God, submits himself to the other for helpful, loving counsel or criticism, to the end that so, by mutually taking heed to the word of the Lord and seeking to measure up to all its requirements, the bride of Christ may make herself ready for the marriage. . . .

"See then that ye walk circumspectly" [carefully, picking your steps. Oh, how carefully we must tread this narrow way!] not like ignorant persons, but as wise men, securing the season for yourselves [taking advantage of your opportunities] because the days are evil. [The times are perilous, and only by sobriety and the wisdom of meekness shall we be able to walk this narrow way to its glorious terminus.]

"Wherefore," he adds, "be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." And may the will of God and the joy and peace of God fill our hearts and leave no room for the spirit of the world to intrude upon us.—Z. '93:11-13.

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The two blind men who met Jesus, hailing him as Messiah, the promised King of David's line, encouraged one another and both got the desired blessings, according to their faith. Here we have illustrated the advantages of Church fellowship in respect to faith stimulation. Let us assist one another in the most holy faith. Let us be helpers and not hinderers to fellow-pilgrims.—Z. '10:109.

Are We Actual or Reckoned New Creatures?

"If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—2 Corinthians 5:17.

OUR information on this subject of the New Creature comes from the Word of God. It is the Spirit of the Truth that bears the witness. "If any one be in Christ, he is a New Creation; the old things have passed away; behold! they have become new." [Diaglott Translation.] Apparently, then, if old things have passed away from us, and we are New Creatures in Christ, we are now receiving the blessings. There is nothing said about being reckonedly New Creatures. The change is actual, bona-fide. When God accepts the human will, He does not hold the New Creature responsible for any of the deeds done previous to consecration. The whole account is a new one.

We are New Creatures in the sense that God has begotten us of the Holy Spirit. God has given us Heavenly promises instead of earthly promises. We are no longer striving to see whether we can attain a higher position in the world. We have new ambitions. Our aim is to live pleasing to God. And in every way this change of sentiment indicates a transformation of mind.

Transformation means to form over again, across, different, in an opposite way. So we have been changed by reason of this change of our will. God has made us the promise that, if we make this change, or transformation, He will no longer count sin to us, that we shall have standing henceforth no longer as sinners, but as holy ones. The world does not know that we are children of God. They do not realize how fully we have given up the earthly hopes and are seeking a different prize from that which the world seeks.

The fact that this change is merely in the mind and not in the body does not alter this matter at all. According to science, every seven years a complete change takes place in our bodies, the new matter coming on as the old matter sloughs off. But one is not a new man because his body has changed. If this were so, we would have had several changes by this time. So far as the mind is concerned, personality is not changed. If we had lost a hand, we would still be the same personality; or if we were to lose a hand and a foot, the loss would not change our personality.

Our personality would not change in this event, because the personality is the mind, the ego. And so when the ego, the mind, is changed, that New Creature is distinctly separated from the other. The fact that it does not yet have a spirit body does not matter. The New Creature is the New Creature, only now he is the New Creature under adverse conditions; whereas by and by he will be the New Creature who has entered into that condition which God has promised—the Divine nature and everlasting joy—and in which he will abide forever.

Our Standing From God's Viewpoint

We are now spirit beings in human bodies. The Apostle says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." It is not the body that is risen, but the New Creature. It was not the New Creature that died, but the old creature. It is not the life of the old creature that "is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3), but the life of the New Creature. The Apostle declares, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." He says also that we are not only to reckon ourselves dead, but to reckon ourselves as though we had been raised from the dead. "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—Romans 6:11.

The body is not the New Creature, but it belongs to the New Creature. It is the servant of the New Creature. The New Creature is the only one that God recognizes at all; for He knows us not after the flesh. And we should live in the Spirit, and view ourselves and all of our affairs from this standpoint. We should "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4.) Our viewpoint should be this: As New Creatures, we merely inhabit these bodies for awhile.

These bodies are our slaves and we are to use them as our slaves. The environment is unfavorable for the New Creature at the present time. But it is the New Creature that God is looking at. "If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.". If he now fails to make good his consecration, fails to be an overcomer, he will have no resurrection; for all his earthly rights have been abrogated.

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." We do, as New Creatures, have the fleshly bodies. But the flesh is not we; that is, not our kind, not our nature. It is only as the New Creature that we can inherit the Promise. Jesus was put to death in the flesh; that is to say, He sacrificed the flesh—He gave up His claim on the flesh at His consecration. And it was on the basis of His giving up His rights that the Father begat Him to the new nature. Therefore He said, My will is to do My Father's will. The Cup that My Father hath poured for Me, I will drink!—John 18:11.

Jesus would not stand for His earthly rights. His dying was not merely at Calvary. It was begun at Jordan three and a half years before. In the type, the high priest slew the bullock, which represented the Man Jesus. Our Lord gave up His life completely—His human life. The High Priest was another person. He went inside and ministered in the Holy while His human nature was sacrificed upon the altar, and His body burned outside the camp, but in sight of the camp.

Difference Between Soul and New Creature

Every New Creature is a soul. The word soul is used in the Scriptures, in a very broad manner indeed, as signifying any sentient being, any being that has sensibility, intelligence. A fish has intelligence; therefore the Bible describes a fish as being a soul (See Genesis 1:20, margin). A dog, a cow, a horse, is each a soul. An angel is a soul, or being. God is a soul, or being—the Bible says so. The Scriptures say that "If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38)—this means God's soul.

This broad use of the word, therefore, in connection with any kind of sentient being, assures us that as New Creatures all of us are souls—intelligent beings. We might be understood to be double souls in the sense that we were human souls to begin with, but that God has through Christ made a special arrangement for us whereby we are begotten again to be New Creatures. This begettal is of the mind; and only in this way are we New Creatures now.

This New Creature is not yet perfected. This new soul has not yet reached that condition which God intends that it shall have. The Apostle tells us that we have this treasure of the new mind in the old body—the earthen vessel. The new mind must do the Father's will, irrespective of the will of the body, or of the friends of the body, and what they might desire it to do. The new mind is to do God's will under all circumstances.

A spirit-begotten child of God may speak of himself as already possessing eternal life, which he does possess by faith. But the New Creature, the new soul, is not yet completed. God's promise is that when this new soul shall have been completed, we shall have a body like Christ. We shall be like Him. We shall see Him as He is and share His glory. We shall be souls on the Divine plane, whereas formerly we were souls on the human plane; now we are reckoned as in the transitional state.

Dual Souls—Not Dual Minds

When we speak of being dual souls, we do not mean that we are dual-minded; for that would be a reprehensible condition. We are single-minded. Our duality consists in the fact that we have the mind of one nature and the body of another. A perfect soul results from the union of life-principal with an organism. It is thus with a fish, a dog, a horse. There is an organism, and there is vitality, a spark of life, before there can be a soul. The Lord's people were human souls, or had the powers common to all mankind, to begin with. Then they were begotten again. And the new will, the new mind, has at present an organism not adapted to its needs.

In the resurrection the New Creature will have an organism fully adapted to its requirements. But now it is a soul that is neither perfect in the flesh nor perfect on the spirit plane. And since the nature goes properly with the mind, the will, therefore the flesh is counted as being that of the New Creature, and the New Creature is held responsible for this flesh.

The Apostle suggests to us that not only our old minds, or wills, are dead, and that we reckon also our bodies dead, but that we go further and reckon our bodies quickened, or made alive, from their dead and sin-disposed condition, that they may be fully our servants as New Creatures, that they may serve our purposes—"quickened by the Spirit of God that dwelleth in you." That is to say, so long as the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is ruling in our hearts and minds, it controls and energizes the physical body.

The Secret of Self-Control

God deals with us as New Creatures from the time we are begotten of the Holy Spirit. He has no dealings with the flesh. The flesh is under condemnation. God dealt with the flesh of Father Adam, condemning it to destruction. Then He provided a way in Christ by which the race may be rescued from destruction. The Church's relationship to God is purely as New Creatures. From the time, then, that we become New Creatures, accepted of God, He takes these mortal bodies of ours, which are consecrated to His service, as a part of the New Creature. So if we suffer, it is the New Creature that suffers. And in this sense God takes cognizance of our flesh from the time of our consecration. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Because our human bodies are vehicles for His service, God takes note of them. In proportion as we become strong in the Spirit of the Lord, we have the power to make the mortal body do what the new mind wills. But we are weak in ourselves. We cannot properly control our mortal bodies. God, therefore, gives us of His Truth. And the more we receive of the Truth, of the Spirit, the more fully sanctified we should be, the more fully in harmony with the Father's will, and the greater control we should have of our mortal bodies.—Z. '13:300, 301.

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To rejoice in tribulations, to endure meekly and patiently a sore thorn in the flesh, and even to glory in such personal infirmities as make the power of Christ the more manifest, is not possible except to those whose hearts are in fullest accord with the loving purposes of God. If the heart be influenced by pride or ambition or love of fame or wealth or any worldly craving, joy in tribulation is impossible. But if the old ambitions and desires of the flesh are kept under, and faith, love hope and zeal are all alive and active, we shall have the consciousness of the Divine favor, and then we can rejoice in every experience.—Z. '11:105.

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"Not a brief glance I beg, a parting word;
But as thou dwell'st with thy disciples, Lord;
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide, with me!"
—Z. [illegible]

Love to God and men, is the only rule under which the New Creature in Christ is placed; and it is the very essence of his new mind—the spirit or mind of Christ.—Z. '94:345.

◆

The patience that is begotten of deep-rooted Christian principle is the kind that will endure all trials and shine the brighter for every affliction through which it may pass.—Z. '94:333.

◆

The man who ignores God is not wise; the man who opposes God is a fool.—Z. '10:378.

◆

Remember that the Apostle refers to these last days of the Age as the most perilous times of all. Why? Because the errors and temptations of this day come in more subtle forms than heretofore.

To escape falling into these errors, and being deceived by their subtle sophistries and by the professions of loyalty to God on the part of the deceived deceivers who advance them, the children of God must keep close to their Father's Word, and be filled with His Spirit: and when they see the Truth they must be bold and fearless in its defence, regardless of all consequences.—Z. '12:306.

◆

Prayer is not to be entered into with a view to changing the divine will and getting it to conform to our imperfect ideas, but rather to bring our hearts and minds and conduct into conformity to the divine will, assured that therein is our greatest and truest happiness.—Z. '93:30.

◆

Finally, we examined what must be the use of the ripe fruit: and we saw that as the ripe grapes are always sacrificed, thus to yield pleasure and profit to others, so Love, fully ripe Love, always leads those who possess it to sacrifice themselves—first, to the will and pleasure of the Lord, the Husbandman, and secondly, to the pleasure and profit of those to whom he sends them to minister. This showed us that all possessing the real spirit of the truth, Love, must be active sacrificers of self in the service of the Truth; and when we remembered how this was the very spirit of our Master, we gladly owned that to have the spirit of the Truth is to have the spirit of Christ—Love.—Z. '91; 68.

◆

HEROES OF ALL TIME BUILT THEREOF

"It takes great love to stir a human heart
To live beyond the others, and apart;
A love that is not shallow—is not small;
Is not for one or two, but for them all.
Love that can wound love, for its highest need;
Love that can leave love, though the heart may
bleed:
Love that can lose love, family and friend,
Yet steadfastly live, loving to the end.
A love that asks no answer, that can live,
Moved by one burning, deathless force—to give!
Love, strength and courage; courage, strength and
love—
The heroes of all time are built thereof."

—Z. '11:365.

If our interpretations of Elijah as a type be correct, the lesson is that the close of the Church's career in the flesh will come suddenly, abruptly. The fiery chariot may prove to be fiery trials or sharp persecutions, separating between the Elijah and the Elisha classes. The whirlwind which carried up Elijah to heaven is a type or figure, very uniformly used in the Scriptures to represent great confusion and strife—a cyclone.

The denouement will not be entirely unexpected, either by the Elisha class or by the sons of the prophets, who would represent here a respectable class of Bible students who have not made a full consecration of their lives to the Lord, and who will not be eligible to the heavenly condition as members either of the Elijah or the Elisha class. —Z. '11:42.

◆

In a short time the Lord will spare His people—not from the trouble altogether, but from any unnecessary experience. We cannot expect that He will spare them as jewels any more than He did His only Begotten Son. He allowed that Son to be put to death—even the death of the cross. Yet He protected our Lord and did not permit any of the things which He suffered to work to His detriment. And so the Lord will spare us as New Creatures. He is preparing for us the glorious things which He has in reservation for the faithful.—Z. '12:327.

◆

We are to remember that the will is the real director of our destiny, under Divine providence, and that it is all-important to have the will rightly directed and established. Many a one is in the broad road of sin and selfishness—away from God today—who has in his make-up many good qualities entirely out of sympathy with his position and course in life. But without the will to guide, to lead, he goes downward. Similarly there are some on the narrow way who have many physical, mental and moral blemishes of heredity continually drawing them toward the broad road, but who are kept in the narrow way of the Lord, not by the self-will of the flesh, but by the power of a renewed will. —Z. '11:186.

◆

"THE INELEGANCE OF HURRY"

There is an idea prevalent that to be in a hurry is a sign of importance, of large business and large achievements. It is a serious mistake. An experienced person always mistrusts the man who hurries, for he fails in emergencies. Serenity of mind and leisurely action are necessary to fine work of any kind. It is in leisure that the mind assimilates best.

Scipio Africanus declared, "I am never less at leisure than when at leisure." A rare bit of wisdom of which all reflective minds know the value. If we admit this as true, the inelegance of a hurried manner has the best of reasons. It is wasteful, inconsistent with the finest action, and is caused by a man losing control of himself, and suggests an uneasy, indecisive mind.

A distinction, however, should be recognized between activity and excited hurry, and between slowness and self-possession. Activity with self-possession is the desirable condition.—Z. '95:11.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY-SEVEN

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The Pure in Heart the Target of the Enemy

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord."—Isa. 52:11.

THE intimation of the Scriptures everywhere is that there are adverse influences at work in the world, tending to defile the people of God. They all have, of course, through the weaknesses of their own flesh, a sufficiency of temptation, we might say, to overcome. But the Scriptures say that this is not all they have to contend against. There are fallen angels that operate through occult influences and that are intent upon defiling especially the saintly class. But they are intent upon defiling all.

The purer the person, the more surely will he be the target. You notice that the speckled birds are more a mark for the huntsman than are the others. Thus all who are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House are special targets for the fiery darts of the Wicked One. So we must contend against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Those who are in the right condition of heart, the pure in heart, earnest as the Lord's children, watch to keep their garments clean. Unless they watch, they will surely get their garments defiled. Satan is specially endeavoring to touch them; and we know that wherever he would touch there is defilement. Whoever the Wicked One touches receives a measure of injury. And there is a measure of culpability in the individual before he is touched.

The suggestion is that to whatever extent one becomes defiled, unclean, in that proportion he would not be fit to be entrusted with the vessels of the Lord's House. Perhaps all of God's people can say from experience that they know something of what this means. Doubtless it is the experience of all of the Lord's children that in proportion as their hearts are clean their spiritual vision is clear. And in proportion as they depart from this purity, in that proportion they would have less and less opportunity for service—for bearing the vessels of the Truth.—Z. '13:185.

TROUBLES MADE BEAUTIFUL

Most of the shells of the oyster are pearly in the interior; and as the true pearls are merely morbid growths, they may all produce pearls of various qualities. The formation of pearls is caused by the introduction of irritating substances, such as grains of sand, between the mantle and the shell. The irritation causes the animal to cover the obnoxious object with layers of pearl, which generally attach the foreign body to the interior of the shell. The Chinese produce pearls artificially by placing substances in the position just described; and we have seen some shells to the interior of which small metal images were attached by this pearly secretion.

When we look at a pearl, we look at an annoyance which has been ennobled. The oyster by itself is of merely nominal value. But the result of the oyster's own treatment of its irritation—the pearl—is something of "great price." Apart from its pecuniary worth this gem has a moral significance.

It suggests that troubles may be made beautiful, and reminds us that amongst mankind some martyrs are more remembered for the glory with which they invested their sorrows than for any other portion of their lives. Biography has its moral pearls, which are treasured long after the creators of them have perished, just as material pearls are valued long years after the oysters have been discarded.—Z. '95:11.

◆

GOD CHOOSETH

There are men who have strong and laudable desires to serve the Lord, and who fervently pray for his glory; but he does not always seem to hear their prayers. There are various reasons for this. Sometimes men are unfit for the Lord's service. They are not purged from their sins; they are not vessels unto honor, fitted for the Master's use; and so he sets them aside as not adapted to his work. Sometimes men wish to do great things, but find themselves straitened, hindered, limited and circumscribed; sometimes they are reserved for still greater work; in other cases they are rejected of the Lord for reasons well known to him.

Moses longed to lead Israel into Canaan, but he was not permitted to enter the promised land. So David would gladly have built the temple at Jerusalem, but the Lord would not accept that service at his hands. Paul was forbidden by the holy Spirit to preach the gospel in Asia, and though he essayed to go into Bithynia, the spirit suffered him not. In like manner we may have desires and aspirations for usefulness which will never be gratified. The Lord may see that we could not bear the exaltation and the honor which we seek. He knows far better than we do what is for our good, and so he would have us rest contented in his providence, not idle but diligent; not careless, but watchful; not indifferent, but full of intense, earnest longing to do the will of God; yet patient under restraint, and content to be neglected and forgotten, remembering that "they also serve who only stand and wait," and that the Lord in his own well-chosen hour can lead us forth to fulfill his purposes of grace.—Z. '95:11.

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None will be total failures here, except those who would also fail of life there,—in the Millennium.—Z. '95:75.

◆

The gate of Faith is made obscure to insure that those who enter shall be faith-full. The way is rugged and difficult to insure that all who continue in that way faithful to the end shall be "overcomers,"—shall be of strong character.—Z. '95:42.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

The Sum of All Graces

"And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: but the greatest of these is love."—1 Corinthians 13:13.

THE Apostle Paul has just been referring to the various miraculous gifts of the Spirit then granted to all begotten of the Spirit to the new nature. Any one lacking some such special gift at that time would thus manifest to all believers that he had not become a member of the Church of Christ. These supernatural gifts also served to assist the primitive Church in spiritual growth. They did not have the Bible in those days, and if they had possessed it, but very few could have read it; hence, they needed special assistance which the Church afterward did not need, and which later was taken away.

In this letter to the Church at Corinth, the Apostle, after discussing these various gifts, says, "And yet I show unto you a more excellent way." Then he proceeds to point out the super-excellence of the fruit of Love. Whoever has the Holy Spirit must have a measure at least of this fruitage, whether it be the little flower that contains the fruit-bud or whether it be the partly developed fruit, the fully developed fruit or the ripened fruit. God our Father, who looks upon the heart, knows how His Holy Spirit in the heart is seeking to control the flesh, to guide the mind and all the words and actions. We are not able to judge one another's hearts. The Apostle said that he did not feel able properly to judge even himself, but left judgment to the Lord. He knew that his heart was loyal and that he was endeavoring to be all that the Lord would have him be. Though he was conscious of his inability always to "do the things that he would," he knew that the Master would accept his loyalty of heart; so he would do his best and leave the remainder with God.

Our faith and our hope in the Lord lead us to earnest endeavor to develop the fruitage of love in all its varied and beautiful phases. Gentleness is a part of love; meekness is a part of love; so also are humility and brotherly-kindness. The question at issue with each child of God is not, How tall and well-built am I? or, How fine-looking or well-educated or well-connected am I according to the flesh? or, How many or how fine sermons have I preached? or even, How many have I brought to a knowledge of the Truth? But the vital question is, How much of the quality of love have I developed? How great is the likeness of my character to that of Christ?

Love Is the Principal Thing

Why is this quality of love made so prominent in the Word of God? We answer, Because it is the **first** thing, the **most important** thing, the **principal** thing. It is the fulfilling of God's Law; and, indeed, the sacrificial love enjoined upon God's saints of this Age goes even beyond the requirements of the perfect law. But **why** is Love put first? It is not because God arbitrarily so placed it, not because He exercised His power of fiat and declared that it should be first. No. It is because no other quality of character is so lovely, so beautiful, so productive of happiness and joy, so great a blessing to all upon whom it operates. It is the very essence of God's character. "GOD IS LOVE!" This quality particularly represents His personality. While God is all-just and all-powerful, we do not say that God is Justice or that God is Power, but that God is Love. He uses His great Power only as Love dictates and approves. He uses His Justice only in fullest harmony with His glorious attribute of Love. Love is the mainspring of all His doings.

Whoever, therefore, would be God-like must be loving, must have love as the dominating quality of his character and his life. Love and righteousness are inseparable. Love is to continue to all eternity; and only those who become the active embodiment of this gracious quality of character will live eternally. Hence we see the paramount importance of its development in every life.

Next to our Lord's marvelous Sermon on the Mount stands this great homily on Love, recorded in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians. Both discourses teach the same lesson, but approach it from different standpoints. As pupils in the School of Christ, all the instructions of the Divine Word and the Divine providences in our lives are designed by the Lord to develop our characters and to influence our conduct in harmony with the requirements of Love. The Master said, "A new commandment I give unto you [the Church], that ye love one another." Since "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," and is "the bond of perfectness" in the child of God, no wonder we are assured from the Scriptures that "God is Love," and that "he that loveth not, knoweth not God!" Our Lord again declared that "this is life eternal—that they might know Thee, the only true God"—the God who is Love.

This noble quality of Christian character cannot be acquired instantly. It is a **growth**; and its development is the chief business, the chief concern, of every spirit-begotten child of God who would know God, who would win the great reward of life on the highest plane of existence and who would see our Father and our Savior face to face and dwell in their presence forevermore.

All Attainments Valueless Without Love

In this wonderful discourse under consideration, St. Paul points out that this crowning grace of Love is the necessary quality to make any service acceptable to God. If Love is not the motive power controlling us, the greatest zeal, the finest rhetoric, or the richest eloquence, on behalf of Truth and righteousness would pass for nothing in God's estimation, and would bring no reward from Him. If love be lacking, great ability in expounding the mysteries of God, much study and great knowledge, would be as naught in winning the approval of the Lord. Even a mountain-moving faith would be valueless, if, looking into the recesses of the heart, the Father could see that love is wanting. The giving of all one's possessions to feed the poor or to spread the Gospel, if done without love as the moving impulse, would be powerless to bring us God's approbation. Death as a martyr would not be acceptable except it was undergone from love to the Lord and loyalty to His Truth.

Why is this? It is because all these things might be done through selfish motives—to be seen of men or to feed pride or to exercise the spirit of combativeness. Love must prompt all our service for God or all will be utterly without value—as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

The Spectrum of Love—Its Component Elements

A college professor, commenting upon this word Love, said, "As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so St. Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of Love, the analysis of Love. Will you observe what its elements are? Will you notice that they have common names, that they are features which we hear about every day, that they are things that can be practised by every man in every place in life; and how by a multitude of ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the **summum bonum**, is made up?

"The spectrum of Love has nine ingredients:

Patience—'Love suffereth long.'
Kindness—'and is kind.'
Generosity—'Love envieth not.'
Humility—'Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.'
Courtesy—'doth not behave itself unseemly.'
Unselfishness—'seeketh not her own.'
Good temper—'is not easily provoked.'
Guilelessness—'thinketh no evil.'
Sincerity—'Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.'"

To the above we add three other ingredients:

Fortitude—Love "beareth all things. . . . endureth all things."
Trustfulness—Love "believeth all things."
Hopefulness—Love "hopeth all things."

We cannot agree with the professor that these graces can be practised by every man, in every place, nor that they are ordinary virtues. We must contend that these fruits as a whole cannot belong to the "natural man." He may indeed **put on** some of the gentleness, some of the humility, some of the courtesy, some of the patience, some of the kindness, as men may attach grapes to thorn bushes or figs to thistles; but with the natural man these graces are wholly put on, and not the outgrowth of the inward grace, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love. They are not an evidence of relationship to God. Where the individual has not been begotten again by the Word of Truth and by the Holy Spirit, his imitation of certain outward manifestations of love will not constitute him a son of God nor bring to him the rewards and blessings of sonship, to which there is only the one Door—Christ Jesus.

And with the Christian a mere outward manifestation of patience, meekness, etc., is not sufficient, either in God's sight or in his own sight. These rich fruits are produced only by the indwelling Spirit of love in his own heart. In civilized countries many of the fruits of the Spirit are recognized by the unregenerate as desirable traits and are imitated, as marks of good breeding. In many cases they are successfully worn as a cloak or mask, covering hearts and sentiments quite antagonistic to the Spirit of Love.

World's Imitation of Love an Outward Veneer

While even an outward imitation of the fruit of Love mitigates to some extent the evils and distresses and frictions incident to man's fallen condition, yet it is only a veneer, as times of stress and trial often manifest in a painful manner. We remember a report which we once read of a conflagration at a certain Charity Bazaar in Paris, which showed that the most polished and aristocratic young gentle-men of the most polite city and nation of earth displayed the ferocity of brute-beasts when face to face with death, and that in their mad rush to escape the flames they knocked down and injured each other, and treated thus even ladies of the first rank in France, to whom they had just before been overly polite. We cannot expect more of a love-veneered, selfish heart—even the strong glue of chivalry will not hold the veneer under such circumstances.

The time is now very near when a far greater and more terrible crisis will make manifest to the whole world that much of the politeness and gentleness of our day is only skin deep, and is not from the heart, not the fruitage of the Holy Spirit of Love. In that great crisis, every man's hand will be "against his neighbor and against his brother," as the Word of the Lord graphically portrays. In that great Day of Vengeance, the masks of formal politeness and chivalry will be discarded, and the world will for a short period get such a revealment of its own hideousness and selfishness as will horrify it and will help to prepare it for the blessed Kingdom of Love then to be established by the great Immanuel, the Messiah of God. And this great Day of Vengeance has already begun.

Drawn by Love Divine

The Scriptures inform us that in our fallen estate unselfish love is foreign to our natures, and must be introduced into them by the Power of God. The Apostle says, "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins." As we learn of this great love of God, and accept the conditions which He has made for our return to Him, through His Son, the love of God constraineth us to love in return.

The measure of our appreciation of Divine Love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the Divine pattern. A naturally rough, uncouth, depraved disposition may require a much longer time after the grace of Divine love enters his heart, before that grace is manifest in all the words and thoughts and acts of the outward man. Others of more refined nature, of gentle birth and cultured training, might even without the grace of God within have many of the outward refinements, so that as a Christian his outward conduct might be much more pleasing. None save He who reads the heart is competent to judge as to who has and who has not this quality of love well developed in his character. We will now take up the various elements of Love.

Analysis of Love's Component Elements

Love is **patient**—it is longsuffering with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give any evidence of good intentions. Moreover, it is patient even with those who are out of the way, and who oppose themselves to righteousness and Truth, realizing that the whole world are more or less under the influence of the great Adversary and his demon host, who blind the minds of the masses. This manifestation of love was very prominent in our Lord Jesus. How patient He was with His opponents! Let us heed the Apostle's words in his Epistle to the Hebrews, "**Consider Him** that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied [in well-doing and patience] and faint in your minds."

Love is **kind** in its methods. It not only seeks to do good, but seeks to do it in the kindest possible manner. In proportion as love is attained the effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, as well as the thought which prompts them, full of kindness. Love is tender, affectionate. It has a real and deep interest in others, especially the brethren in Christ. We do well to remember the motto of the old Quaker: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." This sentiment is especially applicable in the Church of God.

Love is **generous**, and has no place for envy, which, on the contrary, springs from a perverted nature—from selfishness. Love rejoices with them that rejoice; it rejoices in the prosperity of every good word and work, and in the advancement in Christian grace and service of all who are actuated by the Spirit of God.

Love is **humble**—it "vaunteth not itself." It does not sound a trumpet before it. Its good deeds are not done to be seen of men, not done to be praised of the brethren, but would be done just the same if no one should see or know but the Lord alone. It is boastful neither of its knowledge nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father, and returns praise to Him for every mercy received. Love seeks rather to keep self in the background. Some one has truly said, "Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence."

Love is **courteous**—"doth not behave itself unseemly." How beautiful is this trait in the child of God! How much pain is caused by the lack of courtesy, of that thoughtful consideration for others which springs from real love in the heart—love that is trained! Pride and selfishness are at the root of most of the unseemly conduct and boorishness so common to those who think themselves somebody, either intellectually or financially. Perfect love, on the contrary, manifests courtesy along with humility. Politeness, courtesy, may be defined as love in the little things.

The secret of real courtesy is love. A gentleman or lady is one who does things gently, thoughtfully, kindly, lovingly. A true Christian, then, should be a gentleman or a lady in the most real and perfect sense. To ignore the little courtesies of life as unnecessary is a serious mistake in a child of God. A kind greeting, a pleasant smile, little acts of thoughtfulness for others—who has not realized their potency or felt pain from the lack of these?

Unselfish, Sweet Tempered, Sincere

Love is **unselfish**—"seeketh not her own," exclusively or pre-eminently. It never seeks to take advantage of others or to promote its own selfish interests. It goes out to others, and seeks to promote their comfort and happiness. It does not desire to grasp the best of everything for self, nor to have the chiefest seats or the most attention or the highest honors, but rather prefers others in honor, and is willing in cheerfulness to take the lower place. Put into practise, this phase of love—unselfishness—has a great influence for good upon all the affairs of life, in the home, in the Church of God, everywhere.

Love is **good-tempered**—"not easily provoked." Among the evils abounding today is that of ill-temper, fretfulness, bad humor, touchiness, quickness to take offense. To whatever extent this disposition is fostered or willingly harbored, and not fought against, it is an evidence of a deficiency and a lack of development in the Spirit of God, of deficiency in likeness to Christ, our Pattern.

Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive as much leniency and as many excuses for its continuance as does this fault. However much natural weakness or nervousness may tend in this direction, every true member of the Body of Christ must surely vigorously oppose this disposition to be irritable, fault-finding and morose. He must fight this tendency of his fallen flesh, must wage a good warfare against it in the strength of the Lord. The imposition of a penalty upon one's self for every outbreak of irritability or of unlovely temper would soon bring greater watchfulness over the tongue and over the unloving impulses of the old nature. Few traits of character more truly glorify the Lord than sweet temper.

Love is **guileless**. It "thinketh no evil"—does not surmise evil. It seeks to interpret the actions, words and manners of others charitably. Being pure and well-intentioned itself, it endeavors so far as possible to view the words and the conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities and suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil intentions out of trivial matters. "Faults are thick where love is thin," is a wise and true saying. Love makes all possible allowance for errors of judgment rather than impugns the motives of the heart.

Love is **sincere**—"rejoiceth not in iniquity." It is grieved by evils wherever encountered, but is sympathetic toward all who fall into evil through weakness or who are beset by temptations. In this respect love prompts to an opposite course of action from that of Balaam, who "loved the reward of iniquity." Balaam, it will be remembered, feared the Lord, and as His prophet could not think of doing otherwise than according to the strict letter of the Lord's injunction; but he did not have the spirit of obedience and loyalty, the spirit of love; and hence when a reward was offered him if he would curse Israel, he was willing, in order to secure the reward, to conform to the evil proposition, if only the Lord would permit him.

So there are some Christians who have a respect for the letter of the Divine Word through fear, but who lack the Holy Spirit (disposition) of love, and who by reason of a love for wealth or popularity or ease, etc., are willing to engage in various practises which come as near to injuring the Lord's Cause as possible without being in open opposition to Him. Some of these Balaams are in the ministry; and for the sake of salary and prestige and the friendship of wealthy Balaks, they are willing to preach doctrines which they do not believe, to wink at unholy practises, and in various ways to cast stumbling-blocks before Spiritual Israel, and encourage others so to do. Both our Lord and the Apostles mention these Balaams as being false teachers in the nominal Church. See 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14.

Every one who is seeking to develop in his heart the Holy Spirit, perfect love, should guard this point of sincerity of motive as well as uprightness of conduct. The least suggestion of rejoicing at the fall of any person or thing that in any degree represents righteousness and goodness is to be deplored and overcome. Perfect love rejoices not in iniquity under any circumstances or conditions, and would have no sympathy, but only sorrow, in the fall of another, even if it should mean his own gain.

Love "rejoiceth in the Truth." However profitable error might be, love could take no part in it, and could not desire the reward of evil and error. But it takes pleasure in the Truth—truth on any subject, but especially the Truth of Divine Revelation, however unpopular it may be, however much persecution its advocacy may involve, however much it may cause the loss of the friendship of this world and of those blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of Love has so strong an affinity for the Truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress, or whatever may come against the Truth and its servants. In the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of **Him** or His **Word**; and of such He declares that He will be ashamed before His Father and the angels. Love has no sympathy with hypocrisy or pretense. It is transparent and honest in character.

Strong, Trustful, Hopeful

Love is **strong**—it "beareth all things." It is both willing and able to endure, for the Cause of God, reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations, privations, and even death. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"—the very center and life of which faith is the holy spirit of love to the Lord, to them that are His, and of sympathetic love for the world. Perfect love can bear up under the most trying circumstances and conditions which the Lord shall permit to come upon His children, and by God's grace come off "more than conqueror through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us."

Love is **trustful**—it "believeth all things." It is not suspicious, but on the contrary is disposed to have confidence in others, so far as possible, and to give them credit for sincerity. It acts on the principle that it is better if necessary to be deceived a hundred times than to go through life soured by a distrustful, suspicious mind—far better than to accuse or suspect even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition applied to thoughts; and of this disposition the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." The unmerciful mind and heart, ready on every slight provocation or imaginary one to think evil of others, is father to unmerciful words and conduct toward others.

Love is hopeful, buoyant—it "hopeth all things." It is not easily discouraged. Hope is the secret of Love's perseverance. Having learned of God, and having become a partaker of His holiness, it trusts in Him and hopes undismayed for the fulfilment of His gracious Covenant, however dark the immediate surroundings. This hopeful element of love forms one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Its hopeful quality hinders Love from being easily offended or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would become discouraged and put to flight, the spirit of love gives endurance; for its anchor of hope is fastened securely "within the Veil." It holds firmly to the Rock of Ages, and hence cannot drift into despair.

Not only is Love the greatest of all the graces, but really, as we have seen, it is the sum of all the fruits of the Spirit. It is **everlasting**—"Love never faileth." It is for those who develop this quality to its glorious perfection that eternal life has been provided. And those who possess the sacrificial love which our dear Master possessed, who so love as to gladly lay down their lives for the brethren, will gain the fullest and grandest life of all—Divine life. —2 Peter 1:4.

The Editor's Proposition

Let us then, dear brethren, more and more cultivate **love**, remembering that whatever else may be our attainments, all will be in vain without this crowning grace. The Editor has a proposal to make to every reader of this journal, which he believes will prove very helpful to each one who shall co-operate. It is this: That during the remainder of this year (if we shall be spared so long in the flesh) each of us pray every morning that the Lord will bless us in the cultivation of **love**, in thought, in word, in deed, throughout the day; and that every evening, in reviewing the events of the day at the Throne of Heavenly Grace, we remember to report to the Lord respecting our measure of success or failure.

Then note the results of your watching and praying; keep on the lookout for all encouraging evidences of growth in this fruitage of the Holy Spirit. —Z. '15:115-118.

The New Mind versus The Mind of the Flesh

"To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. 8:6.

THERE is a distinction between the New Mind and the New Will which we all must recognize. The New Will is the determination of the New Mind. There must be some mind there in order to have a will, in order to reach a determination, and there must be knowledge upon which a will can be intelligently exercised. We are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity" (Psa. 51:5); we have this natural tendency to begin with. Our minds, at first conformed to earthly things, generally take the earthly view of matters, the selfish view. Then the Lord, through his Providences, brings certain propositions to our attention and sets before us that there is another way, "a more excellent way"; that God is now holding out a special prize to those who will live contrary to the flesh and according to his will.

When this proposition reaches the individual, our Lord says that he should "sit down and count the cost." He should not rashly say, "Yes, yes"; but he should deliberate as to what this means—the cost in self-denials and the giving up of earthly preferences. After having counted the cost, and after having made the consecration, his will or determination should be so set as not to allow it either to favor the flesh or to be guided by the flesh. He should resolve that henceforth whatever is God's will shall be **his** will, whether he understand all about that will or not. He must, however, see the outlines of the Divine will and something of the advantages accruing, before he can form the decision. This is the class which the Father accepts and begets of his holy Spirit.

The new mind may sometimes be misled by false reasoning of the flesh. Our natural minds have their preferences, ambitions, aims and desires and they sometimes argue about certain things and say, "God never intended that that should be given up; God would not expect you to do anything so unreasonable as that!" And so, perhaps, the New Creature is deceived, and allows the flesh to have its way; but just so surely as it is a New Mind it has not intelligently or willfully assented to a wrong course; but, as the Apostle says, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me." (Rom. 7:11.) So there is a continual battle on the part of the new will, the New Creature, after being begotten of the holy Spirit, and he must watch lest the Adversary try to make him think that which is wrong to be right, and that which is right to be wrong. These, then, are snares which the Adversary places for the feet of the New Creature, and he uses the flesh in connection with its ensnarement; but the New Creature in his will, his intention, must remain loyal to the Lord and to righteousness. If he yield his will to unrighteousness or ignore God's will, then he has ceased to be a New Creature; the new things are passed away and all things become old again. This is a condition, we understand, from which he can never be recovered.—Heb. 6:4-6. . . .

How May We Know When We Are in Danger?

It might be asked how one could know when he was traveling toward that point of danger, so that he might arrest his progress. To one not blinded by the Adversary, the point of deflection from harmony with God's will would be as easily detected as would the border line between two States. The only ground upon which we were granted our present standing was our renouncement of sin and our consecration to the Lord—the giving up of our wills, complete surrender to him; and thus we came into the position of having the imputation of Christ's merit. If we should go back again and our will for righteousness become dead, this, of course, would imply that another will is there. We must have a will of some kind. If our will is no longer a righteous will, then it has gone across the border line and, according to the great Apostle, such never retrace their steps. "Christ dieth no more." There can be no more imputation of Christ's merit to such. They have had their blessing and if they, as the Apostle says, "return like a dog to his vomit," the step must prove fatal.—1 Pet. 2:21, 22.

True, the new mind at first is weak, undeveloped; and so the Scriptures represent the New Creature as being merely "a babe in Christ," a babe in knowledge and a babe in the development of grace. But the Scriptures tell us that just as we care for a babe —specially handle it, specially feed it, specially deal with it, and do not treat it as we would treat an adult—so the Lord proposes that he will deal with all those who are babes in Christ. "He will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to bear, but with every temptation will provide a way of escape." (1 Cor. 10:13.) The temptations will be permitted only in proportion to their feeble strength. He will supply for them the milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby, and gives them the assurance that all things shall work together for good to them.—Rom. 8:28.

The trials at the beginning, therefore, are commensurate with the weakness of the New Creatures. It is true in some instances, however, that the New Creature seems to have a great deal of courage and strength at the beginning—perhaps more than is ever exhibited afterward. This, of course, is not a satisfactory condition of things. We ought to go from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge; after a time, we ought to be teachers, as the Apostle says, and not need to be taught again the first principles of the doctrines of Christ. God deals with us now as New Creatures under the direction of the Head. He supervises all the interests of each member of the Body. All things, if properly accepted, are overruled of the Lord for good to us individually.

This is one of the great lessons of faith that the Lord's people need to learn, even after they have been in the way a good while. There are some Christian people who seem to have the impression, or at least give it to others, that they did this and that or saw so and so by their own wisdom. True, we all should use all the wisdom and strength we have; but the Christian who is relying upon himself is in a very dangerous position and quite likely the Lord will find it necessary to give him a lesson. For while it is his duty to rule his life so as to walk in the right paths, yet he needs continually to exercise faith in God and in the Lord's oversight and direction of his affairs, for "the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord." If, in the Father's providence, some of the circumstances connected with our earthly affairs turn in this or that direction, our hearts should look to the Lord for the lesson to be drawn therefrom, and thus be able to glorify God thereby. The Christian should never view any experience as being lucky or unlucky, but should remember that all things connected with him, if he be living close to the Lord, are ordered and directed by the Lord.—Psa. 37:23; Z. '10:189, 190.

God's Promise to Abraham Reiterated

(Gen. 15:1-18.)

"I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

LOT had not lived a great while in Sodom when king Chedorlaomer descended upon the Sodomites with an army and took away many persons and great spoils of flocks, herds, etc., including Lot and his family and possessions. Word of this affair reached Abraham, who armed his own servants, 318, and with two associates pursued the victors, who, doubtless expecting no army or night attack, were careless as to their defenses, and being surprised by a night attack were routed; and Lot and his family and goods, and the Sodomites and their goods were released. The conduct of Abraham in connection with this matter was most noble and unselfish. Not only did he inconvenience himself and all his affairs for the sake of others, but subsequently he refused any share of the booty which he had saved. Would that the children of God could fully appreciate such benevolence and copy it more in the little affairs of life! Much of the distress prevailing in the world is the direct or indirect result of selfishness, and all of the Lord's people should be on the alert to practice and to exemplify the opposite spirit of benevolence in the little things as well as in the great things of life; and should remember that selfishness is a depravity, which needs to be fought against, and to be, so far as possible, overcome by the new nature.

One would have supposed that Lot's vexatious experience in Sodom, and after experience in his capture and subsequent deliverance by his uncle, would have led him to desire a reunion with his uncle, with a keener appreciation than ever of the fact that God was with his uncle, blessing him and guiding his affairs and interests. But this does not seem to have been the case: he was still willing to cast his lot with the ungodly. He reminds us of the words of the Psalmist, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." (Psa. 1:1.) Lot did not pursue this course, and hence failed of a blessing. It was not sufficient that his righteous soul should be "vexed" continually by the misconduct of those about him; his love for righteousness should have been such as to lead him to the sacrifice of temporal interests on behalf of his own heart and on behalf of the interests of his family. Let all of the Lord's people who may find themselves in a similar position remember the Apostle's words. "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."—Heb. 12:13.

It was directly after his experience in the delivery of Lot and the defeat of Chedorlaomer, and while Abraham was evidently feeling somewhat disheartened or discouraged, that the Lord again manifested himself to him. We do not know the cause of the discouragement, but may infer that he realized that in his attack upon, and defeat of the army and the military forces behind it, he had probably incurred a displeasure which could not be wiped out by anything short of the destruction of his own camp. As ever, Abraham was peaceably disposed; and the battle he had just won implied the straining of his whole nature. He had done what he considered to be his duty in the interest of justice, and especially in the defense of his own ward, Lot; but now that the excitement was past the reaction set in, and with it certain gloomy feelings and forebodings. So also some of the Lord's people today have moments in which for various reasons the flame of faith and hope smokes, and darkens the eyes of their understanding and the clearness of their perception of the divine character and plan; but if they still hold firmly by faith to the hands of divine providence they will find, as Abraham did, that even the trials and difficulties and discouragements of life will be overruled for good to them.

It was while Abraham was downcast that the Lord appeared to him in vision and said to him, in the language of our Golden Text, "Fear not Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Apparently this was the great lesson that God was teaching him and which he was learning by the experience permitted, much better than had the Lord not delayed some of the promised favors. Abraham was now 84 years old; and, although wealthy and highly favored of the Lord, he was a pilgrim and a stranger, away from kindred and home through his respect to the divine call and promise. He had no children to cheer and enliven and comfort his home, and even his nephew, Lot, whom he had not detained unwillingly, had preferred the companionship of the wicked and had left him, and even when rescued from his enemies, at the cost of danger and sacrifice, he had not appreciated the matter fully, and still preferred the strangers.

No wonder poor Abraham felt as though his life, passing quickly by, was a comparative failure—no wonder he felt discouraged. How the words of the vision must have brought new thoughts, new sentiments to his heart; God was his **shield**—to protect him, to guard him from the anger and power of all the kings of earth and their armies, and able and willing to make all things work together for his good. What a comfort was in this thought. How it reminds us that God is our shield also; our protector from every evil thing and power. The thought is beautifully expressed in one of our hymns:—

> "Shield of my soul, tho tempests rage,
> And 'gainst me hosts of foes engage,
> My refuge and my fortress thou;
> Before thee every foe must bow."

The latter part of the message is no less striking: the fact that, not flocks nor herds nor servants nor children nor friends, were to be the **prize** upon which his heart should be set; but that God himself was to be his **reward**;—the having of God for a friend and counselor and guide was to be esteemed far beyond every earthly interest and blessing. And so it is also with the Church of the Gospel age. We may have blessings or adversities or both, as respects the present life. We have promises which pertain to the life that now is and also to that which is to come; but all of these together are inferior, subordinate to the one great thought that God, the great Creator is ours,—our Father, our God, our Friend.

Undoubtedly Abraham's heart was comforted by this message; and yet his reason was still operative, and hence his inquiry of the Lord. How can you bless me and fulfil to me your gracious promises, seeing that I go childless—seeing that my servant Eliezer and his children are the only heirs apparent for my estate? Is it wonderful, Lord, that I should feel discouraged, seeing that apparently the most indispensible part of your promise is unfulfilled for now fourteen years, and that Sarah and myself are growing old; and that even my nephew, Lot, who might have perpetuated the family and been the heir of my estate, cares not for me and has gone from me? The Lord was not displeased to have Abraham use his reason in this manner, for it was not a reasoning of skepticism or doubt as respected the divine power, but merely the proper questioning of faith as to how the promises on which he had left his home could be fulfilled; and a request for guidance in understanding. And so may we inquire of the Lord respecting his gracious promises. Indeed, he invites us to reason, saying, "Come, let us reason together." In Abraham's case the Lord merely repeated and amplified previous statements to the effect that he should have a child of his own who should be his heir, and leading him out from his dwelling in the starry night, he assured him that his children would yet be multitudinous as the stars of heaven. This feature of the promise evidently applies to the spiritual Seed—the Christ, the elect of God, Head and body, as explained by the Apostle. (Gal. 3:29; 1 Pet. 1:2.) The other expressions,—"as the dust of the earth," and "as the sands of the sea," represent, not the natural children of Abraham, but the whole number of the human family who, under the blessing of the spiritual Seed, during the Millennium, shall ultimately attain to the faith and obedience of Abraham, and full human restitution and the Lord's reward for these—life everlasting.—Rom. 11:12, 15, 32.

The record is that Abraham believed on the Lord—his faith in God triumphed over every obstacle and rested securely, confidently;—his doubts and fears fleeing away. The faith of Abraham is the particular point of his character prominently set before us in the Scriptures for the encouragement of our faith, for our example. Abraham was not perfect, even as others of our race are imperfect,—"There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10.) But we are told that God so highly esteemed Abraham's faith that he counted it as making up for his natural blemishes and imperfections. "It was counted [reckoned] to him for righteousness."

(Rom. 4:3.) He had faith in what God had told him, and, as James (2:22) points out, he manifested his faith by his general conduct. We of the Gospel age are also justified by faith—righteousness is reckoned to us through the exercise of faith—but not faith in the same promises.

God does not promise us earthly children nor an earthly inheritance in the land of Palestine as he did promise to Abraham: hence we are not to have faith in the same things. As the Apostle says, God has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises"—promises much greater than those given to Abraham: heavenly, instead of earthly promises. We are to believe the promises given to us and to act upon them as implicitly as Abraham believed the promises given to him and acted upon them. The promises made to Abraham were attested by the Lord's word and by his oath, and similarly, though on a still higher plane, the Lord has made known to us, has attested to us, his love and power, and his willingness to perform for us all the good things promised.—Z. '01:247-249.

Individual Conquest of Our Inheritance

"Be thou strong and very courageous."—Joshua 1:7.

THE words of our text were addressed by the Lord to Joshua, who was leader of Israel after the death of Moses. He had special need of these encouraging words. The Israelites were a stiff-necked generation. It was difficult for any one to be their leader. Especially difficult was it because Moses had been for many years with them. It is always difficult for a smaller man to take a larger man's place.

In some respects it was easier to direct Israel while they were anticipating the coming into the Promised Land, before they had entered it. During the forty years in the wilderness they had learned to depend on the Lord. In a few brief words we have given us quite a clear idea of the Lord's manner of dealing with His people during these forty years. Moses, in exhorting the people to fear and love the Lord, and in recounting their provocations of Him, tells them that they shall possess the Land, and adds, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

"Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." (Deut. 8:2-5.) Israel had very few battles during the time of their wandering. The Amalekites had had some little skirmishes with them, but on the whole they had experienced very little trouble, and yet they had rebelled against the Lord and against Moses more than once.

Now, their enemies were entrenched in the Land of Canaan, and it would require strength and courage to take the Land. Their instructions from the Lord were that they should occupy Canaan. God was taking the land from the Canaanites because, like the Sodomites, they had gone as far in their wickedness as Divine Wisdom saw best to permit. Instead of taking the Canaanites away as the Sodomites had been taken away, the Lord caused the Israelites to **conquer** them and to **wrest** the land from them.

The Conquest of Canaan a Type

In Israel's taking possession of the land of Canaan, we believe there was a typical significance. In some respects the Israelites, warring against the Canaanites, typified the war that the New Creature has with the flesh. In proportion as the New Creature takes possession of the entrenched positions of the old creature, it overcomes and gets possession of the land. The New Creatures, God's people, are under the leadership of the antitypical Joshua. They are to overcome the weaknesses and meannesses of the fallen nature, to the best of their ability.

In the case of Natural Israelites with the Canaanites, the latter were strongly entrenched in the land, and they were not to be overcome without **many battles**. The Canaanites had their mountain fastnesses, to which they could retreat. These typify the fastnesses in our nature to which the fallen inclinations retreat when we find it impossible as New Creatures to vanquish them. As St. Paul says, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:17.) But our ability to gain the victory will be in proportion to our faith in God and our reliance on Him.

Thus it was with the Israelites. In proportion as they trusted the Lord, they had success in getting possession of the land, conquering their inheritance. With the exception of the tribe of Levi, a certain inheritance was given to each tribe. So with us as individual New Creatures. There is a certain inheritance to be apportioned to each of us. We cannot conquer for each other. Each must conquer his own inheritance individually.

The words of our text were addressed to Joshua, the leader of Israel. The words can be understood as referring to all the Israelites, but especially to Joshua because he was their leader. The word Joshua means **savior, deliverer.** The Greek form of the Hebrew word **Joshua is Jesus.** As Joshua was to deliver the Lord's people, and give them possession of the Land of Promise, so Jesus is to deliver God's Spiritual Israel, and give them their inheritance.

The words of our text then implied that there would be trials and difficulties connected with the conquest of Canaan: "Be thou strong and very courageous." Those trials and difficulties would require strength and courage in the typical Israelite. Likewise this is true of all who would be sharers with our Lord in the antitypical Promised Land.

There is a difference between being **strong** and being **courageous.** One might be strong, invulnerable in the position he has taken, and yet not be courageous for further conquests. The difference between these two qualities is particularly illustrated in the Little Flock and the Great Company. The Lord's true people should be strong in their determination to lay down their lives in self-sacrifice, that by laying down the earthly life they may become partakers of the Divine life. God has no blessing for those who will not put forth earnest effort.

Even the Great Company must be strong, or they will not get the palms of victory. The difference between the Little Flock and the Great Company is that while the Great Company will finally overcome, with the Lord's help, yet they will not have been very courageous. Therefore they cannot be of the Little Flock, who are close followers of the great Leader, our Joshua, in battling for their life, gladly laying down their lives in the service of Jehovah. Joshua represents the "more than conqueror" class. The strength of the Lord is supplied to this class. Therefore they are very courageous in overcoming everything that is in opposition to the Divine will.—Z. '13:250, 251.

Patience a Cardinal Grace of Character

"Ye have need of patience [cheerful endurance], that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the [fulfilment of] the promise.—Heb. 10:36.

THE Apostle is addressing the Christian Church —You who have left the world, who have accepted Christ as your Standard-bearer, as well as your Redeemer, and who are seeking to walk in His steps, and have made consecration of your life to the Lord—"**Ye** have need of patience." To a certain extent you did the will of God when you made your consecration to be dead with Christ. But that will of God was more deeply impressed upon you when you began to realize more than at first what this **sacrifice** would **mean,** and that only those who **suffer** with Christ shall **reign** with Him.

"After you were illuminated" you saw the matter clearly, and "endured a great fight of afflictions." This was well. But St. Paul goes on to show in the context that some, after having demonstrated their zeal for a certain time, become cold. They become weary in well doing. And he tells us that these thus cut themselves off from the favors, privileges and blessings belonging to the Church of Christ. His exhortation is that those who are still loyal to God at heart continue so and exercise **patience,** remembering that this is one of the cardinal graces of Christian character. Many have naturally a little love, a little gentleness, a little patience, a little meekness, etc. But after we begin to grow in the graces of the Holy Spirit, we need **patience** to control the flesh, the spirit of the world, the spirit of selfishness.

The will of God is in one sense of the word the standard of God—full perfection—that we should be like our Father which is in Heaven. But God remembers that we are fallen creatures, and that we cannot do perfectly. Our text does not mean that we must do the will of God in the perfect and complete sense; but rather, as the Apostle elsewhere says, ours is a **reasonable service.** When we present our bodies living sacrifices to God, it is our reasonable service. God does not expect us to do that which is impossible.

The Purpose of Our Testing

What is this will of God? Stated in concrete form, "This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification." (1 Thess. 4:3.) As the Apostle teaches, consecration is a full and complete setting apart. If we do such a setting of **ourselves** apart at the beginning, then the **Father** sanctifies us —begets us as New Creatures, and sets us apart. So we have, first of all, our setting of ourselves apart; and then God's acceptance by our begetting of the Holy Spirit as New Creatures, and His continued work in us.

We are doing the will of God when we fully consecrate ourselves to Him, and attain a place in the New Creation. But He wills to put us to the test. How much do we love God? How sincere are we? A soldier in an army might be loyal in time of quiet, but how would he be in time of stress? Would he desert the flag then, or would he prove himself a good soldier? He would need a great deal of patience. If he says he loves his country, his endurance and faithfulness will be tested in her time of need. He must go on picket duty; he must sometimes do menial work. He must endure wearisome marches, and many privations. All these things are required of a faithful soldier. If he is faithful, he is likely to be promoted, honored, for his faithful service.

So we are tested as to our **loyalty.** What are we willing to **endure** for Christ's sake? How **fully** are we submitted? How **deep** does our submission go? Are we wholly in harmony with the will of the Lord? Is our interest merely superficial, or does it enter fully into our hearts? The question is not merely, Shall we make the consecration?—but after the Christian has taken all of these preliminary steps, to what extent will he manifest patient endurance and obedience and loyalty?

God puts us to these tests because He has great honors to bestow on those who will be overcomers. They are to be a select company, and these will receive the Promise. As the Apostle says, it is after we have proved our loyalty to the very last, that we shall receive the Promise; i.e., its fulfilment.

The Essence of the Promise

When, where, what is the Promise? Undoubtedly the promise will be received in the resurrection. The promise includes all that God has in reservation for them that love Him—that love Him more than they love houses and lands, or children, or parents, or friends, or husbands or wives, or self, or any other thing.

The particular promise that the Apostle refers to here is **The** Promise. All our hopes and blessings are centered in the original Promise made to Abraham, when God brought him out of the land of Chaldea into the land of Canaan. God promised Abraham that in His Seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. That has been the great promise for encouragement to the Seed, to give them patience and fortitude. This is the essence of the Promise—that those who receive the Promise shall be the Seed of Abraham to bless the world. The faithful in Christ will be associated with Him in His Kingdom—will have the honor of blessing all the families of the earth under this Kingdom. Every creature of God shall then be brought to a knowledge of His Truth, and shall have the opportunity of being restored, if he will, to perfection, to all that was redeemed on Calvary. . . .

Notable Examples of Patient Endurance

St. James exhorts the Church saying, "Take, my brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." Those whom the Apostle addressed already knew of the sufferings of Jesus. They already knew of the faithfulness of the Apostles. And now he was calling the attention of their minds to something **additional**. He is urging, Look back into the past, and see that patient endurance has been characteristic of all who have lived holy lives. These examples should be lessons of encouragement to us, in addition to those we have in the living brethren around us!

Then there is always something to be gained in casting the mind backward. The things close at hand are too near to be seen in their proper light. It was fitting that the Apostle should call attention to those faithful ones of the past, so that we might be encouraged to note what God desires. In those who are His, He desires a willingness to endure patiently and loyally, thus manifesting true character, that which greatly pleases Him.

As we look back over the Old Testament record of the Prophets, we notice that many of them displayed this very quality referred to by the Apostle as loyalty to the Lord, a willingness to suffer afflictions for **His sake**, and not as experiences brought through chance upon them by the people. We see Moses—how willing he was to suffer affliction because of his faith in the Promise made to Abraham and his conviction that the Promise would come true. He preferred to suffer with the people of God rather than to live at ease in the royal family of Pharaoh, into which he had been adopted.

We see in Job another example of patient endurance of tribulation and of strong opposition for a considerable time. We see the same in Jeremiah—how much his faithfulness cost him of hardship, and how patient he was. We see the same in Daniel the Prophet—his faithfulness to the Lord, his patient endurance of whatever God permitted to come against him. And so with others of the Prophets. And we read that their experiences were written for **our** admonition, **our** instruction. Although they belong to one Dispensation and we to another, yet their experiences furnish us good lessons.—1 Cor. 10:6, 11.

Personal Application of These Lessons

Applying these lessons to ourselves, we may say that to whatever extent we may be privileged to speak the Word of God and to suffer persecution therefor, if we take it with patience, it will bring us a corresponding blessing and commendation from the Lord. But we cannot think it would be pleasing to Him if, when we suffer, we think, Oh, how terrible, terrible, terrible! Such an attitude would not be taking His Word for it, that "**All** that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall** suffer persecution," and that all things shall work out for our good.—2 Tim. 3:12; Rom. 8:28.

When Job was rich, prosperous, God tested him by taking from him all his family, all his wealth, his health, and even allowing his wife to turn against him. Yet in all this Job did not turn against God. He did indeed express wonder, but he looked to the Lord in faith and said, "Though worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." I shall yet receive the manifestation of His favor, and learn what He means by these experiences, these afflictions, coming upon me. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."—Job. 13:15.

After his testings had been accomplished, God gave him back children, houses, lands, friends. And these coming in abundance shadowed forth the blessings of Restitution—how the tribulations of mankind will eventually work out for good to those who will love God. If those who are now suffering affliction because of their loyalty to the Lord, because of their trust in His arrangements, will take afflictions and trials joyfully, these will surely work out good to them—"a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—Z. '13:312-314.

◆

Those who, though loving the Lord and righteousness, cling to the desires of the world and the flesh, and endeavor to drag these along in the race, are never satisfactory to the Lord nor to themselves. And they find "the **destruction** of the flesh" a much more severe ordeal than its "sacrifice" would have been; for the Lord's smile is upon those who joyfully sacrifice what they can in his service. Go on, dear Brethren, the King is your Brother as well as your Lord, and his "grace is sufficient for you." He says, "Be thou **faithful** unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Faithfulness means to the extent of your ability; and none of us should expect to be owned at all of the Lord unless to do according to our **ability** in his service. The love of Christ constraineth us to do no less than this.—Z. '95:75.

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The love of Peter would, if possible, protect the Lord from his predicted tragic end, the Lord promptly rebuked any interference with the divine plan to which he himself was fully submitted. Like our Lord, we should be so fully submitted to the will of God that even the kindly meant dissuasions from duty on the part of our own friends, or the natural desires of our own flesh, we should recognize as besetments of the Adversary; and we should promptly and firmly resist them.—Z. '95:22.

◆

In whatever shape the tests of character are applied to us we have reason to be thankful for their good office in the better acquainting us with our own hearts.—Z. '95:47.

◆

Let our service and suffering be according to wisdom and love—to as good purpose as possible. In our services we should be careful not to interfere with the liberties of others. "Let none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters." And let us also be careful not to make our sufferings subjects for boasting, as though seeking the praise of men, or of continual complainings to other members who are themselves perhaps suffering more acutely. If we suffer, let it be as unto the Lord.—Z. '95:64.

◆

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." It would not be consistent with righteousness to do otherwise than abstain from the appearance of evil, as well as from the evil itself. If we love righteousness and hate iniquity we will hate the very appearance of evil ourselves, and will shun the appearance as we would shun the thing itself. We will shun it, not only because we desire to have others think well of us, but because we love purity and delight in moral excellence.—Z. '95:75.

◆

The last members of the body of Christ are here. Let us hasten to do all in our power, both temporally and spiritually, for the feet of Christ; let us do all in our power to cleanse them from earth defilement, even though it cost us tears; let us anoint them with the precious spikenard perfume. The more costly the affection and love that we bestow upon the members of the body of Christ, the very lowest and humblest of them, the better; all should be but an expression of the warmth of love which is in our hearts for Him and His. The time is passing rapidly—soon the last members will have crossed and be beyond the veil, beyond our anointing and beyond the blessed word, "She hath done what she could." Let us earn that expression from the dear lips of our Lord by faithfulness to those who now represent him in the world—to the household of faith, to the members of the body of Christ.—Z. '06:332.

◆

Some of the Lord's people, are in danger of putting too large a proportion of their love upon wife or husband, parent or child, brother or sister, and thus idolizing them and bringing an earthborn cloud between their hearts and the Heavenly Father. It is well to be on guard and to remember that, however much we may love others, the Lord must have all our hearts in the sense that he would be first and chief, and that if it were necessary every earthly tie might be broken, however tender, rather than the tie that binds our hearts to the Lord.—Z. '06:302.

◆

When we shall be raised in His likeness in the resurrection, we shall not have our fleshly brains for recollection, and we therefore shall be dependent upon the Divine Power for the memory of all the experiences of the present time. So when we read, "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44), we have this thought, that the Divine Power will impress this spirit body with the knowledge of all the blessed experiences of the present time, so that these experiences shall not be fruitless, but profitable to us, making us better qualified and more able for the Divine service, as well as for the carrying on of the work of the New Covenant.—Z. '13:9, 10.

◆

The Master's advice should be remembered, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." Do that which is in harmony with that aspiration and leave to God the oversight and care of earthly interests, that He may give you the lessons and experiences most helpful for you. Those who follow His advice find peace and joy which the world can neither give nor take away—"the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

Whoever has the Lord's blessing is rich indeed, regardless of the amount of this world's goods which he possesses. Of what value is all the wealth of a Croesus if it bring not peace, joy and happiness? Wherever we go we find all—rich and poor—seeking pleasure, seeking the springs of joy; but how few of these seekers ever find it! Alas! it seems impossible for the world to understand the great fact that the blessing of the Lord constitutes the true fund of riches and pleasures forevermore—more than the life that now is, and the coming one!

Those whom the Lord makes rich with His promises and His favor, His guidance and His blessing, have the joy which others are vainly seeking.—Z. '13:30.

◆

Neither the world's ignorance and unbelief nor the lukewarm indifference and prejudice of the great majority of professed Christians shall prove stumbling blocks to God's elect—to those who in simple child-like faith accept the testimony of his blessed Word. Such cannot stumble; nor is it possible that THEY should be deceived. By their faith and God's leading such will overcome all. Fear not, precious

Jewels of the Lord's own choosing; lift up your heads and rejoice, knowing that your deliverance, your exaltation and glory, draweth nigh.—Luke 21: 28; 12:32; B. '189, 190.

◆

To each of us comes the testing question, "Lovest thou me more than these"—more than the business pursuits and prospects, more than the social ties and pleasures, more than ease, or comfort, or friends, or fame, or wealth, or a good name, or any earthly good?

Ah! it is truly a test question, and a question which no one can sincerely answer in the affirmative who has not the inspiring incentive of love in the heart. But pure, fervent love to Christ does quicken zeal, and enable those who have it to respond gladly and promptly, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," and sends them forth with joy to prove their love by their works. "If any man love me, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me." "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "The servant is not greater than his Lord: if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs."—Z. '95:136.

◆

"TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR TOMORROW"

We are to understand these words in perfect harmony with the Apostle's words, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," and "He that provideth not for his own (as he may be able) hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Our Lord's words signify, Do not be weighed down with anxious care for tomorrow; But while seeking to know and to do God's will, trust in his providential care, which he has promised will cause all things to work together for good to them that love him supremely. It is as right for the husband to consider the future welfare of his wife, as for the Heavenly Bridegroom to provide for the Church (Eph. 5:25). It is as proper for the earthly father to make provision for his children—especially in good training and fair education, as for the Heavenly Father to plan for and educate and prepare a future home for his children. (1 Cor. 2:9.) It is when parents attempt to become rich and to leave their children rich that they specially err. (1 Tim. 6:9; 17, 18; Mark 10:23, 24.) They in attempting to contravene the law of God (that sinners learn to labor and to eat bread in sweat of face) work an injury to their children. But their error does not justify other parents in neglecting to give their children the best patrimony, an education, at least rudimentary, including religious and moral training.

Those who leave their children such a legacy and the example of a noble, upright life of fellowship with God leave a bequest which the breaking of banks and insurance companies and all the terrible troubles of "the great day" will only make the more pricelessly valuable.

So then our advice to God's consecrated people is,—"Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed." Use time and money in the Lord's service, and rely upon him to cause all things to work for your highest good.—Z. '95:144.

The every-day life of faithful saints will preach a sermon to all who know them, which their lips could never speak.—Z. '92:188.

◆

Beloved, the Lord has led us in the past by a way we knew not. It has not always been an easy way, but it has always been a safe way, a profitable way though often a rough and thorny one. True, it has been a way of privation, a lonely, wilderness way, but it has been good for that discipline and training so necessary to fit us for the greater blessings of the Canaan beyond. And has not the glory of the divine presence and favor been sufficient to compensate for all the barrenness of the wilderness way? Ah, yes! we hear you say; and our hearts respond, Amen!

"Oh, what are all earth's gilded toys
Compared with heaven's eternal joys?
Or even to the feast now spread
For pilgrims through the desert led?
Oh, sweeter far the wilderness,
With all its bleak, wild barrenness,
Than all the city's pomp and pride
Without our heavenly Friend and Guide.
Its manna is a foretaste sweet
Of heavenly bounty all complete;
Its cloudy pillar, guiding light,
Are earnests of the future bright."

Let us keep the wilderness way and rejoice as we go.—Z. '95:170.

◆

Love is the only bond of perfectness—the perfect bond. Neither bind yourselves nor others with any other bond. Love supreme to God will mean that loyalty to his Word will outrank all other considerations; love for the brethren will mean a generous readiness to see as many as possible of each other's virtues and talents and to seek for each other's highest spiritual welfare—whatever the channel.—Z. '95:182.

◆

What are the privileges of the Christian, if through great tribulation he must enter the Kingdom? They are, oh, so grand! It is his to know the joy of sins forgiven; and many need to have this told them over and over again, that they may fully appreciate it. It is his to know of the Heavenly Father's Love and care—matters so easily forgotten in the stress of life. **These assurances of the Word need to be repeated over and over**: "The Father Himself loveth you." "God is for us." "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." —Z. '13:106.

◆

As every Israelite was required to gather manna for himself, so each Christian is required to gather and appropriate the Truth. We must do our own part along spiritual lines, as well as along earthly lines. The graces of the Holy Spirit cannot be expected to come to perfection without preparatory planting, pruning, cultivating. Some one has well said, "Rooming at a college does not make a scholar, nor occupying a pew in Church make a Christian." To grow strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, we must feed upon Him daily—we must appreciate and appropriate the merits of His sacrifice.—Z. '13:218.

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Old Corn Gems

NUMBER FIFTY-EIGHT

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"Let Your Moderation Be Known"

ST. PAUL urged, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4:5.) The latter clause of this exhortation implies that it belongs specially to the closing of this Gospel Age—to the opening of the New Dispensation. Surely we find his words applicable to ourselves—yea, to all mankind!

Surely there never was a time when this counsel of moderation was so much needed as now! The very air seems charged with some exciting, nervous force. Good people, wise people, thoughtful people, seem easily excited and liable to lose their balance at the very suggestion of ridiculous and foolish things. If any of us find such to be our condition, prayer should be made for that Wisdom which cometh from Above, to strengthen, establish and settle our hearts and lives in the will of God.

Excitement over some vagary of interpretation of God's Word may be injurious to ourselves, injurious to those with whom we may have any influence, and injuriously encouraging to the one who propounds the foolish interpretation.

It is unavoidable that politicians, socialists, anarchists and others, attempting to forecast the future respecting themselves and the world, should be carried away with their own ideas, and lose their bearings and talk irrationally. God's people, on the contrary, are to be most moderate in all things. First, they are to recognize their own littleness and inability, and God's greatness and sufficiency. Secondly, they are to remember that God is ordering all the affairs and interests of His Church and also those of the world; and that all things are working together for good to those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose—to be members of His elect Church, the Bride of Christ. —Rom. 8:28-30.

Such consciousness of personal littleness and of Divine greatness should keep us very humble and restrain us from all boastfulness and headiness and "know-it-all-ness." We should be very thankful and very appreciative of what God has made known to us of His gracious purposes, but should strictly avoid every attempt to run before the Lord and to try to rudely break into any feature of His Plan which He has not yet unlocked. We should remember that any knowledge we might gain in advance of God's due time would be injurious to us. As, for instance, Mother Eve, already possessed of knowledge of good, by disobedience broke into and gained a knowledge of evil, in advance of the Divine regulation. The knowledge thus gained was expensive.—Z. '13:167.

Well has the Apostle said to Christians that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." And we might add that the godliness which does not bring contentment is of little value, and not likely to last. We do not mean the contentment of sloth and indolence; but the intelligent contentment which springs from full confidence in the Lord's love, wisdom and power to cause all things to work for good to those who devotedly love him. Such have the peace of God to rule their hearts and can sing:—

"Content whatever lot I see
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

They alone in the storms of life can lift up their heads and hearts and rejoicing sing:—

"My Lord how full of sweet content
My years of pilgrimage are spent!
Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot.

"While place we seek or place we shun
The soul finds happiness in none;
But with our God to guide our way
'Tis equal joy to go or stay."—Z. '95:188.

◆

It is not our privilege or opportunity to anoint the Head of the body, the Lord Jesus. Simon and others of that time had that great privilege, however they used it. With us, however, the privilege still remains of anointing the feet members of the body of Christ, and day by day we are tested along this very line. To what extent do we love much the Lord and his members? Is it not in proportion to our appreciation of the divine love for us and for all mankind? If we love little we will honor little, if we love much we will honor much.—Z. '06:123.

◆

Ours are strenuous times of great activity, mental and physical. The Lord's people, busied with the common activities of life, endeavoring to provide things needful, honest, have special need to heed the words, "Come ye yourselves apart in a desert place and rest awhile." Many of us enjoyed a brief season of resting and refreshment at our last convention. . . . It is our experience that while these conventions cost those attending them considerable money, especially for railway fares, they nevertheless, are sources of great spiritual profit and refreshment. Likewise the one-day conventions, though in a lesser degree and to smaller numbers. The Lord, we believe, is pleased that we should estimate spiritual strength, refreshment, grace, above financial cost. This, however, would not signify extravagance, wastefulness, neglect of duty nor the contracting of debt.—Z. '06:156.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The next General Convention will be held at Bellingham on July 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Further particulars will be given in our next issue.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER FIFTY-EIGHT

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Trials of Faith—Why Permitted

MANY are perplexed as to why false doctrines are permitted to annoy and confuse God's people. On receiving the truth and rejoicing in it they seem to think they have at last come to the end of all controversy, and have entered the Beulah land of rest and peace, thenceforth never again to be disturbed. But this is quite a mistake: our great adversary, Satan, is not disposed to let the children of light walk on undisturbed into the heavenly kingdom. Against that kingdom and its establishment, and against all its prospective probationary heirs, he is an inveterate enemy, and his power is not yet bound. The children of light, the heirs of the kingdom, are, therefore, the special targets against which his fiery darts are aimed. As soon as they escape from the kingdom of darkness and begin to walk in the light, they may therefore expect to find snares spread for their feet and stumblingblocks placed in their way. The work is done with subtlety, too, that, if possible, the escaped bird may be deceived and caught unawares. And, as a matter of fact, thousands are so caught, and only a few escape the "strong delusions" of this "evil day" of Satanic wrath and power.

It is a fair and reasonable question therefore, Why does the Lord permit the strong delusions and trials of faith of this evil day, when they actually do overthrow the faith of many and severely test all? To this enquiry the Apostle Paul (2 Thes. 2:10-12) makes answer, saying, "For **this cause, God,** shall send them [Whom?—Those "who received not the love of the truth that they might be saved"] strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be condemned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Thus plainly we are told that God not only permits, but that he also desires, that the faith of his professed people should be severely tried. And if the thousands fall by these fiery darts of the enemy, it is because they are unworthy of the truth, not having received it in the love of it. Many indeed receive the truth very much as a child receives a new toy. It is a curiosity, something new, to be enjoyed for a season and then laid aside to be superseded by something else that temporarily pleases the fancy. Or, it is valued as a cudgel wherewith to gain the honors of victory in argument with disputing opponents. Or, again, it affords relief to some from a long imposed bondage of fear of eternal torment, and for this alone it is chiefly valued. They never did enjoy such a prospect, and often feared they were not quite good enough to escape torment and get inside the door of heaven.

All who thus lightly esteem the truth, merely to minister to their selfishness, are unworthy of it; and it is the will of God that all such should lose it. Hence the divinely permitted and desired testing of faith—the strong delusions, which, "if it were possible, would deceive the very elect,"—those who have received the truth in the love of it, and not in any mean, selfish spirit. The truth was never intended for the listless, nor for the wicked. The former are unworthy of it and the latter are better without it until taught to use and not abuse the liberty it brings. "Light [truth] is sown for the righteous, and joy [the joys of the truth] for the upright in heart." It is just as well that others, especially the wicked, should remain under the bondage of errors which to some extent control them until the strong power of Christ's kingdom is due to take the control of the world. For this reason God has permitted the superstitions of the past to fetter men's minds, and only in the present close proximity to the kingdom is he allowing some of the shackles of error to be loosened; and in the great time of trouble this will be seen to be the unchaining of the tiger of human passions, which would be disastrous in the extreme, were it not for the strong rule of the iron rod which will shortly command order, and say to the warring elements, "Peace, be still!" To the listless and selfish who are not grossly wicked, the truth is only made to minister to pride and selfishness, and hence it is the will of God that all such should lose it, as they do in pursuance of their natural dispositions with reference to it. But the true children of God love the truth because they have an affinity for it. They love righteousness, they love their fellow men, and desire to bless and help them. They have large benevolence and brotherly kindness. They are meek, too, and not anxious to make a show of self and to glory over their fellows in argument; nor are they mere curiosity-hunters. When they have found the truth they recognize its value; they prize it and meditate upon it; they view it as a grand and systematic embodiment of the highest ideal of righteousness, love and benevolence. They rejoice not only in its gracious provisions for the elect joint-heirs with Christ, but also for all mankind, as well as in the merciful dealings of God with the finally incorrigibly wicked whom he will mercifully destroy, but not torment. They say, It is just like God: it is the manifestation of his glorious goodness, the reflection of his loving, benevolent, wise and just character. And therefore they love the truth and the God who gave it; they treasure it up in their hearts and con it over again and again; and as they look into it, and admire all its symmetry and beauty, they strive more and more to conform their own characters to the same lines of beauty and seek to commend it by word and conduct to others, that they also may be blessed by it.

This is what it is to receive the truth into good and honest hearts. For such the truth was intended; and it is not possible for them to be deceived by the sophistries of error. They know a good thing when they have it, and therefore hold it fast. They cling to it just as steel filings cling to a magnet, because they have an affinity for it. If you run a magnet through a box of sawdust and steel filings it will come out covered with the steel filings. A little sawdust may rest lightly on it, too, just as some people associate themselves with the truth and with those who hold it very dear; but the sawdust is easily blown off, while the steel filings hold fast. Just so multitudes of those who associate themselves with the Lord's people are easily carried away with a little wind of new false doctrine. And though they do not all disappear with the first breeze, a few more breezes will carry them all away. But the true ones God will not permit to be tempted above what they are able to bear; for he has given his angels a charge concerning them, and in their hands they shall bear them up lest at any time they should dash their feet against a stone.

The angel or messenger thus commissioned may be some well-instructed brother who has studied to show himself a workman approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth, and ever ready to feed the flock of God, or some faithful sister, ever watchful with motherly interest over the lambs of the flock. Albeit, the Lord will always provide for his own elect, and they shall not stumble nor fall.

The one thing for all the called to look to first is that they have received, and that they still hold, the truth in the love of it. Freely imbibe its blessed spirit and live in its hallowed atmosphere; "for, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "Through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" you are chosen to the great salvation now shortly to be revealed (2 Thes. 2:13.) But the belief of the truth will avail nothing if it be not permitted to produce its legitimate fruit in a good and honest heart—viz., sanctification of the spirit, a complete setting apart to the divine will and service. Let us lay this lesson well to heart, and so run as to obtain the prize of our high calling. "Buy the truth" at any cost of self-sacrifice, "and sell it not" for any paltry present advantage.—Z. '96:54, 55.

"Christ in You, the Hope of Glory"

(Col. 1:27.)

LANGUAGE is but a medium for the communication of thought, and words are but symbols of ideas. When words are so framed in sentences as to express an impossibility or an absurdity, when considered literally, but to forcibly illustrate a known truth, when symbolically interpreted, we instinctively recognize the figure, and are instructed by it. In this way many of the deep things of God—the spiritual things—are expressed to us, since they are often forcibly illustrated by things familiar to us on the natural plane. Thus, for instance, the resurrection, both natural and spiritual, finds an illustration in the processes of vegetation (1 Cor. 15:35-38); and the processes of the beginning, development and final perfecting of the spiritual sons of God find a remarkable illustration in the begetting, quickening and birth of the natural man. (James 1:18; Eph. 2:1; John 3:3.) But if, when we read these symbols or illustrations of spiritual things, we pervert and dishonor our God-given reason by accepting palpable absurdities as their interpretation, we deceive ourselves, and in so doing are not blameless. In parables and dark, symbolic sayings our Lord opened his mouth and taught his disciples, expecting them to use their common sense in either interpreting them themselves, or in judging of the correctness of any interpretation offered by others as they should become meat in due season. And when on one occasion, instead of using their brains to draw from it the implied lesson, the disciples asked for the interpretation of a parable, Jesus suggestively and reprovingly replied, "How then will ye know all parables?" (Mark 4:13.) He would have us think, consider and put our God-given mental faculties to their legitimate use.

Bearing in mind these wholesome reflections, together with the fact that the Scriptures abound in these symbolic expressions of truth, let us consider the Apostle's meaning when he speaks of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." He uses the same figure again in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 4:19), saying, "My children, whom I am bearing again, till Christ be formed in you," etc. Here the Apostle is likening his care and labor and endurance, for those who had been begotten by the Truth to the new nature, to the physical endurance of a mother in nourishing and sustaining the germ of human life until the new human creature is formed and able to appropriate for itself the life-sustaining elements of nature, independent of her life. So the Apostle sought to nourish and sustain those germs of spiritual being with his own spiritual life until, apart from his personal work and influence, they would be able to appropriate for themselves the God-given elements of spiritual life contained in the Word of Truth, until the Christ character should be definitely formed in them.

In no other reasonable sense could the Apostle bear those Galatian Christians; and in no other reasonable sense could Christ be formed in them, or in us. The thought is that every true child of God must have a definite individual Christian character which is not dependent for its existence upon the spiritual life of any other Christian, but which, from the Word of Truth, proclaimed and exemplified by other Christians, has drawn those principles of righteousness and those elements of life which give him an established character, a spiritual individuality of his own. So positive and definite should be the spiritual individuality of every one, that, should even the beloved brother or sister whose spiritual life first nourished ours and brought us forward to completeness of character fall away (which the Apostle shows is not impossible—Heb. 6:4-6; Gal. 1:8), we would still live, being able to appropriate for ourselves the spirit of truth.

Paul feared, and had reason to fear, that the Galatian Christians had not yet come to this condition of established character—that the Christ life was not yet definitely formed in them. He said, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (Gal. 4:11); for already they were giving heed to seducing teachers and departing from the faith, showing that they were not established in the Truth, and consequently not established in the spirit of the Truth, which is the spirit of Christ, and hence that Christ was not yet formed in them.—Verse 19.

Alas, how often we see among those who bear the name of Christ, and who have truly received the spirit of adoption as sons of God, that Christ is not yet formed in them: that they have not yet reached that degree of development which manifests a distinct spiritual individuality. They depend largely upon the spiritual life of others, and if their spiritual life declines these dependent ones suffer a similar decline; if they go into error, these follow, as did many of those Galatian Christians to whom Paul wrote. How is it, beloved, in your several cases? Apply the question to yourselves—Is Christ formed in you so fully that none of these things move you? that, however they may grieve you at heart, they cannot affect your spiritual life? This is what it is to have "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

A cloak of mystery and superstition has been thrown around this expression of the Apostle, evidently by the great adversary of the Truth and the Church, to the effect that in some secret way, known only to the initiated, Christ personally comes into the consecrated soul and uses that soul simply as a machine; and that consequently the machine is about infallible, because Christ is using it; that for them to speak, or think, or act, or interpret the Scriptures, is for Christ to do it, in whose hands they are merely the passive agents. With this idea they generally go further, and claim that Christ personally talks with them and teaches them independently of his Word; and some go so far as to claim that they have visions and special revelations from the Lord. Some speak of this presence as Christ; some as the holy Spirit; and some speak of them interchangeably.

While there is a semblance of truth in all this, and while we remember that Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them . . . shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him; . . . and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:21, 23), it is true that a more serious error could scarcely be entertained than this idea of personal infallibility because of the supposed mysterious presence of another being within.

Notice that this promise of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is to those who have and keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus. Those, therefore, who ignore the Word of the Lord and have not his commandments—who do not know what they are, and hence cannot keep them, but who hearken to the voice of their own imagination and note all the changing states of their own feelings, mistaking them for the voice of the Lord, and following the impressions arising from this source, instead of the commandments or teachings of the Lord—are quite mistaken in claiming this promise. Under their delusion they are following another spirit than the spirit of truth; and unless recovered from the snare they must inevitably plunge deeper and deeper into superstition and error.

The first difficulty we meet, in attempting to dispel this delusion from the minds of those infatuated with it, is the claim that this is a higher attainment in the spiritual life, up to which we have not yet measured. If the testimony of the Scriptures bearing on the subject is brought forward they say, "Oh, I see you have the head-knowledge, but you have not the spirit, you have not Christ in you." They then proceed to tell how Christ is in them, and that he is "teaching them wonderful things," which we shortly discover to be quite out of harmony with the Word of God. The case is indeed a sad one when all Scripture testimony to the contrary of their belief is set aside with claims of superior revelations of Christ or the holy Spirit which other children of God do not enjoy, and that Christ personally dwells in them, etc., etc.

Who but these deceived ones cannot see that, if their theory be true—if God talks with them and answers all their queries aside from his written Word, the Bible, through mental inspiration, or by dreams, or by audible sound—then the Bible is to such a useless book; and time spent in its study is so much time wasted. Who would "search the Scriptures" as for hid treasures, as the Lord enjoined and as all the apostles searched, if they could shut their eyes, or kneel, and have God make a special revelation to them, respecting the information desired. Surely any sensible person would prefer a special revelation on a subject, rather than spend days and months and years examining and comparing the words of our Lord and the apostles with those of the prophets and the Book of Revelation ("searching what or what manner of time the spirit did signify"), if they could ask and have an inspired and infallible answer in a moment. None of God's consecrated ones should be thus misled of the Adversary. It is the stepping-stone to pride and every evil work—to **pride**, because those who are thus deceived soon feel themselves honored of God above the apostles, who even in conference judged of the mind of the Lord as read in his Word and in his providential leadings in harmony with his Word (Acts 15:12-15); to **every evil work**, in that those thus puffed up fancy themselves infallible, and, separated from the anchor of truth, the Bible, Satan can soon lead them rapidly into the outer darkness of the world, or into yet darker delusions.

But the testimony of the Scriptures is quite to the contrary of this vaunting Spirit. Paul says, "Know ye not . . . that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates;" and then he exhorts that we examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, or whether we have rejected the faith and thus become reprobates—no longer acceptable to God. (2 Cor. 13:5.) Every **true** child of God has respect to the commandments of God: he searches the Scriptures that he may know them, and is not left in ignorance of them; and, learning them, he endeavors to keep them, and the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is with all such so long as they continue to hold and to keep (obey) his commandments—to hold the truth in righteousness.

To have the truth and to keep it is not merely to accept it on the recommendation of some friend, and because it gives some comfort and costs nothing, and to hold it until some other presumed friend dazzles the unsettled mind with some fanciful theory. The promise of the abiding presence of the Father and the Son is not to such. Christ is not in them: Christ is in the humble and sincere ones. He and the Father love and abide with them.

But how? To illustrate—a friend accompanying another to a railway station said, as he was about to board the train, "Remember, I will be with you all the way." He meant that his thoughts would be with his friend and that he would be concerned for his welfare, etc. In a similar, and yet in a fuller and broader sense, the Lord is ever present with his people. He is always thinking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in danger, providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, reading our hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion to him, shaping the influences around us for our discipline and refining and hearkening to our faintest call for aid or sympathy or fellowship with him. He is never for a moment off guard, whether we call to him in the busy noon hours or in the silent watches of the night. And not only is the Lord Jesus thus present, but the Father also. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness! And no real child of God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption. Sometimes it is more manifest than at others; as, for instance, when some special trial of faith or patience or endurance necessitates the special call for special help, and forthwith comes the grace sufficient with a precious realization of its loving source. Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

Every true child of God has these precious evidences of sonship, and the roughest places in his pathway are so illuminated with divine grace that they become the brightest, and memory continues to refer to them with thankfulness; and faith and hope and love grow strong and inspiring.

Our Lord always links the progress and development of our spiritual life with our receiving and obeying the truth, and every child of God should beware of that teaching which claims to be in advance of the Word, and that Christ or the holy Spirit speaks to such advanced Christians independently of the Word. The snare is a most dangerous one. It cultivates spiritual pride and boastfulness, and renders powerless the warnings and expostulations of the sacred Scriptures because the deluded ones think they have a higher teacher dwelling in them. And Satan, taking advantage of the delusion, leads them captive at his will.

These symbolic expressions of the Scriptures must be interpreted as symbols, and to force any unreasonable interpretation upon them manifests a culpable wilfulness in disregarding the divinely appointed laws of our mind, and the result is self-deception. When we read, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16), the only reasonable interpretation is that we dwell in the love and favor, and in the spirit or disposition of God; and that his spirit or disposition dwells in us. Thus God by his indwelling spirit works in us to will and to do his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13); and we are reckoned as not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the spirit of God dwells in us.—Rom. 8:8, 9.

Let us endeavor to have more and more of the mind, the spirit of God—to have his word abide in us richly (John 15:7; Col. 3:16)—to have and to keep his commandments, that the abiding presence of the Father and the Son may be with us; and that, realizing that the Christ character and life are definitely formed in us, the hope of glory may be ours; for our Lord said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) How careful then should we be in seeking both to know and to do the will of God. Many indeed will come forth with the plea of their wonderful works, hoping to be admitted into the kingdom, but **only those will be recognized who have done the will of the Lord, and who have no theories or works of their own whereof to boast.**—Z. '93: 243-246.

"That Servant"

Luke 12:37-48; Matt. 24:42-51.

THIS lesson, from Matthew's account (Matt. 24:42-51), was treated in our issue of April 1, '95. We have no further comment to make except upon one point: "that [special] servant." In our examination of this text we seem to have treated the term "that servant" as though the Spirit had erred in saying "that servant" when it meant servants (plural), and we applied it to **all true** servants of God. Since then we have been met from various quarters with objections to so general an application, and the suggestion that it would be wrong to allow modesty or any other consideration, good or bad, to warp our judgment in the exposition of the inspired Word; to which proposition we agree. God evidently has some purpose in all that he has caused to be written for our admonition; and faithfulness as servants requires that we deliver to the household the Lord's word, as he gives it.

Being unable to answer the objections and arguments raised, we candidly present them to the "fellow-servants" and to the "household" of faith as part of the Lord's message: the subject being forced upon us by its recurrence in the International S. S. Lessons, as well as by inquiries by letter. Let each "fellow servant" and each member of the "household of faith" use his consecrated judgment in accepting or rejecting this exposition, or any other exposition we may ever offer, according to his ability or inability to recognize in it the voice of our great Shepherd.

The objection urged is that the Lord's words clearly mention and distinguish between his "household" (his faithful people in general), the "fellow servants" (plural), and **"that servant"** specially indicated as the Lord's agent in dispensing present truth as food to his "fellow servants" and the "household." It is admitted that in many Scriptures the consecrated are addressed individually when all of a class are meant,—as, for instance, "To **him** that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne." This, according to the rules of language, means—"To **each one** who overcomes," etc. And in the texts under consideration, it is held that if neither the "household" nor "fellow servants" were mentioned, it might be questionable whether the expression **"that** servant" referred to one or to all faithful servants; but that when **"that servant"** and **"his fellow** servants" and the "household" are all mentioned in one connection, and in **contrast,** it would be a perversion of the rules of language and interpretation to mix and confound that which the holy spirit has so emphatically marked as distinct. It is further urged that to apply the term "his household" to nominal Christian professors in general could not be correct, because the "meat in due season" is intended only for the Lord's truth-hungry, "watching" people; and hence among these must be sought the "household" to be fed, the "servants" (plural) to do the feeding, and "that servant" at whose hands our **present** Lord will dispense the food to "his fellow servants" for "the household"; and who thus is constituted a general steward, overseer and dispenser of the Lord's "goods."

It is urged, further, that the manifest **fulfilment** of this, during the "harvest" and time of the Lord's **presence,** should assist in the correct understanding of the promise; and that when we see things come to pass we should be able to recognize them whether we discerned their meaning in advance or not. Indeed, the demonstration seems to have forced the true interpretation, rather than that an interpretation led to the fulfilment;—which makes the matter really the stronger, now that it is seen.

It is further suggested that whoever occupies the position of "that servant" occupies a place of special danger, as well as of special privilege; that only by humility and faithfulness can he continue; and that, although not so stated in the Scriptures, it may be inferred that if the chosen one should fail, another would be chosen to be "that servant" or steward through whom the Master would continue to supply the "meat in due season" to those deemed worthy to continue at his table.

We submit the argument without comment.

It is well to notice that these words are not a parable, but an explanation of a parable (Luke 12:41) recorded in preceding verses (36-40). The parable had set forth the fact that the "powers that be" (ecclesiastical, social and political) would be unaware of our Lord's second advent when it would take place; and that the times and seasons were kept secret specially on their account; because if they were fully convinced of the great events of that time, and their own dissolution to make ready for the kingdom of God, the "new heavens and new earth," they would alter their course from fear, to perpetuate the present imperfect order, and to hinder the establishment of the better Kingdom. In view of this, our Lord indicates the necessity for faithfulness and watchfulness on the part of his servants, that they may be in such condition as to be quickly and readily made aware of the presence of their Master, while "the powers that be"—the present householder—sleeps in ignorance of the true state of affairs, and dreams of his own greatness and prosperity. The parable enforces the necessity that all of God's faithful servants be constantly prepared and ready, so that as soon as the "knock" is given, they may recognize it, and open their hearts and minds to the fact of the Lord's **presence**, and, as his "household," all sit down to enjoy the meat in due season which he will then serve, through his visible, human agencies.

After hearing the parable, and perceiving that only the faithful were to know of the matter, Peter was perplexed, and wondered whether the Lord meant that "**all** [faithful brethren]" would sit down to meat and be served by the Master, or whether only "**us** [the twelve]:" for he had already discerned that the Lord had some **special** favors for "the twelve" alone. Of course, if Peter had known that the parable would not be fulfilled for over eighteen hundred years, after all the twelve would have died, he would not have asked the question in that form. But our Lord, without correcting his error, explained this feature of the parable for our information. His answer in verses 42 to 48 (and Matt. 24:44-49) declares that while He will be the real Provider and Servant, yet the food will be dispensed through a steward to "fellow servants" and the "household" in general.

The word "**ruler**" in verses 42, 44 and Matt. 24:45, 47, of the common version, does not properly express the thought of the original: the Revised Version is preferable: "set over his household **to give them** meat" as a "steward," not as a lord or master—rather a general servant, or servant of all. —Z. '96:47.

Gold Tried in the Fire

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."—Rev. 3:18.

IN OUR study of the typical tabernacle, which was a shadow of good things to come, we have seen that everything inside the tabernacle was made of gold. The boards of which the tabernacle was constructed were overlaid with gold. The furniture also was of gold. There stood the golden candlestick, the golden table, the golden altar of incense, the golden ark of the testimony and the golden cherubim. Gold was also prominent in the typically glorious robes of the high priest. The fringe upon the upper robe was of golden bells and pomegranates; the texture of the ephod was interwoven with golden threads, and it was fastened on the shoulders with golden clasps; and upon his head was the golden crown, upon which was inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

All this was in striking contrast with the metals used elsewhere about the structure, its typical significance here being that all within "the Holy," which represented the present condition of truly consecrated believers, and within the "Most Holy," which represented the glorious condition of the Church triumphant, pertains to the divine nature, gold being a symbol of divinity. All who are privileged to enter the antitypical Holy and Most Holy are also to be, as Peter tells us, "partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) They are members of the body of the great Highpriest whose divine nature was symbolized in the gold of the typical highpriest's typically glorious garments.

It is in harmony with this same symbolic meaning of gold, that the Revelator says of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, "And the city was pure gold [a divine institution]. . . . and the street of the city was pure gold [all its highways are of divine appointment]." (Rev. 21:18, 21.) And the Psalmist, referring to the privileged class who, when glorified, shall constitute that heavenly city, government or kingdom of God,—the members of the body or bride of Christ, partakers of the divine nature,—says, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir. . . . Her clothing is of wrought gold."—Psa. 45:9, 13.

It is to the same apt symbolism that our Lord also refers in addressing his people in our text,—"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." These words, be it remembered, are not addressed to the world, but to the Lord's people, justified and consecrated. (Rev. 1:1; 3:14.) This call is an exhortation to them to faithfully fulfil their covenant, to submit themselves fully and unreservedly to the discipline of the Lord, which is necessary for their perfecting in holiness, and for making them ready to reign with him as his bride and joint-heir in the glory of the divine Kingdom.

Not until we lay hold by faith upon the **exceeding great and precious** promises—of joint-heirship with Christ in his coming Kingdom and glory—which promises lead us to fulfil their conditions of consecration and self-sacrifice even unto death, is there any of the "gold" of the "divine nature" in us. This treasure can be purchased only at the cost of entire consecration or sacrifice of all that we have, to Christ. Previous to our justification by faith in Christ we had nothing to sacrifice, all that we had being under condemnation; but, being justified, we may present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service. Thus the treasure of the new, divine nature, the gold, is given us. Thus we "buy" the gold.

But we have this treasure in the earthen vessels, and there is consequently much of alloy mixed with it. Hence the necessity that the gold be cast into the crucible for refining. And if we would purchase the "**gold tried in the fire,**" it must be at the cost of faithful and constant submission to the discipline of the Lord in the fiery trials which are necessary to consume our dross and refine our gold. Wherefore Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) And Paul reminds us of the counsel of wisdom (Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5-8),—"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

Peter also reminds us that the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, and that the end sought through such trial is that we may be "found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:7.) It would be idle for any of the Lord's consecrated people to hope to be made meet for the glorious inheritance of the saints without the refining processes of fiery trial; for Paul tells us that "the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." "If ye receive not chastisement [discipline, fiery trial], whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (1 Cor. 3:13; Heb. 12:6-8.) And through the Prophet Isaiah the Lord tells his spiritual Israel, as well as his typical fleshly Israel, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin." (Isa. 1:25.) The Prophet Malachi, making special reference to the last days of this age, the days of the Lord's presence, and the great refining work to be accomplished then, says, "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver."—Mal. 3:2, 3.

Fiery trials are therefore to be expected by all of the Lord's people, especially in this day of the Lord. As surely as we are sons of God we shall have them; and when they come we should promptly recognize their mission to us and see that we are exercised by them unto godliness, sobriety and deep and fervent piety. "Now no chastening [discipline] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Heb. 12:11.

It is in the school of experience that we learn our most valuable lessons; and the ripest saints, in whom we find the deepest sympathy, the most patient forbearance, and the most tender helpfulness and consideration, are those who have been through the fire of affliction, and who have been rightly exercised thereby. It was when the cross grew heaviest and the clouds were darkest, and when the tempest was highest, that the Master's presence was most sensibly realized, and the blessed lessons of faith and trust and of the Lord's tender, personal love were sealed upon the hearts of the disciples. It is under such discipline that the soul is mellowed to a loving submission that calmly says, I can do all things, bear all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me. As gradually the dross of the old nature is consumed, and the gold becomes more and more manifest, these precious souls become ever dearer to their loving Lord. So dear are they to him that in every affliction he is near with his grace to sustain and his presence to cheer; and the deepest shades of sorrow become memory's most hallowed resting places, where the Day Star shines the brightest.

Whenever a new trial is presented to the Christian, if he will but call to mind this precept of the Lord, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire," it will stimulate courage, nerve to patient endurance, and quicken to self-sacrifice. "Gold tried in the fire!" How can it be tried without the crucible and the flame? How otherwise can the dross be eliminated? There is no other way. "Wherefore, think it not strange:" let the fire burn; let the dross be consumed; and see to it, beloved, that in the heat of the flame you remove not the "living sacrifice" from the altar. Remember that the eye of the great Refiner is upon you; and as the refiner of gold watches the metal in the crucible to see his image reflected in it, so the Lord, the great Refiner, has his eye upon you. He is watching to see how the precious metal of your character reflects his image. Or, in plain language, in every trial he watches to see what influences control our actions, whether they be influences of present advantage, or worldly policy, or personal friendship, or earthly loves—of husband, or wife, or children, or houses, or lands, or whether they be honor among men, or love of ease, or love of peace at any cost; or whether, on the other hand, we are controlled by the naked principles of truth and righteousness; and whether we will defend these principles with zeal and energy at any cost of labor or suffering, or both, and so fight the good fight of faith to the bitter end—even unto death.

Those who do so, reflect the Master's image. Like him they are loyal to God, loyal to the principles of truth and righteousness, brave, obedient, faithful. These are the overcomers. They overcome by faith; for without a strong reliant faith they could not thus endure hardness as good soldiers, and pursue to the end a course which is continually against the current of the old human nature. Faith buckles on the armor of God and goes forth to the battle with firm and steady tread, quickened by the inspiring melody.—

"Awake my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown."

The Christian's course of self-sacrifice cannot be one of ease and continuous smooth-sailing and peace. There may be a calm now and then, but storms and battles are the rule; and he who courts ease and peace at the expense of the principles of truth and righteousness, or who is so indifferent to the value of those principles as not to study to discern them in order to defend them, is not a faithful, overcoming soldier of the cross.

"Ne'er think the victory won, nor once at ease sit down;
Thine arduous work will not be done till thou hast gained thy crown."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." "If any man come to me, and hate not [i.e., and love me not more than] his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple . . . Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. . . . He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Matt. 10:34-38; Luke 14:26, 33, 35.

Oh, how necessary is the hearing of faith to the victory of faith—to that victory which makes every other love subservient to the love of God, which makes every other interest bend to the interests of his great work, and which cheerfully sacrifices every other interest to the interests which center in Christ and in his coming Kingdom. The ear of faith must be attuned to the melodies of divine truth if the soul would catch its blessed inspiration: and the eye of faith must discern the symmetry of truth and the beauty of holiness, if the soul would be filled with a burning zeal for God—for his truth and his righteousness.

But let the soul be thus inspired with deep and abiding love for the melody of truth and the beauty of holiness, and filled with a holy zeal for God, then everything else takes a secondary place, and we have the victory by faith in every encounter with the enemy. The soul thus stayed upon God can always trustfully sing, —

"If on a quiet sea toward home I calmly sail,
With grateful heart, O God, to thee, I'll own the
favoring gale.
But should the surges rise, and rest delay to come,
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm, which drives
me nearer home."

—Z. '96:43-45.

Love Not the World

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—1 John 2:15.

ONE can scarcely read this advice of the Apostle John without having another scripture suggested to his mind, which, at first sight, may seem contradictory; viz., "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." The two, however, are not antagonistic, but are in full harmony when rightly understood. If God so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), as to sacrifice the dearest treasure of his heart in order to redeem and save them, then such love and such benevolence toward the world on our part cannot be out of harmony with his will. Indeed, such is the direct teaching of the Word. "Do good to all men as you have opportunity;" "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—Matt. 5:44-48.

To love the world as God loves it, is not the sentiment against which the Apostle warns the Church, as the context clearly shows. That is a grand and ennobling love—a love which stands on the high plane of purity, and without having the least fellowship with the impure, nevertheless pities the fallen, and is active in efforts to rescue them from their degradation. This divine love, so worthy of our imitation, is that which benevolently ignores personal antagonisms and animosities, and, overleaping all selfish considerations and vengeful feelings, considers only the possibilities and the ways and means for peace and reformation and salvation.

But the love of the world to which John refers, as the context shows, is the love of fellowship, which implies the partaking of its spirit—its aims, ambitions and hopes, and its methods of pursuing them. If any man love the world in this sense, surely the love of the Father is not in him; "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world [i.e., according to the spirit of this present evil world]. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

As children of God we have been called to a position of great favor and advantage. Our Heavenly Father has revealed to us his plans and purposes and has condescended to take us into his fellowship and active cooperation; and so grand and extensive is our outlook of the future that we are able to view the present life in a very different light from that in which the world views it. The world walks on in darkness without the light of life, and consequently to them the things of this present life, which we have learned to count but as dross, are to them of great value, and they strive and run and contend for the delusive prizes that bring with them only labor and sorrow and quickly pass away.

The Apostle has very briefly summed up the world's treasures as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lust of the flesh includes all the fleshly appetites and passions, the merely animal instincts. To these thousands sacrifice all the higher interests. To fare sumptuously in eating and drinking and frolic and pleasure is their delight. The lust of the eyes demands luxury in dress and home appointments, and the gathering for self-gratification of all that is admired and desired. And the pride of life glories in the shame of that selfishness which has ignored the wants and woes of the needy and suffering, and complacently said to self, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." And it goes further: it despises the poor and needy and oppresses them.

Such is the spirit of this world. It is the very opposite of the spirit of God and of Christ; and those who are led of the spirit of God should keep as far from it as possible. Their conduct, their dress, their home-life and home appointments must all speak a different language. We are to mind not high things, but to condescend to men of low estate; to show no preference to the man that wears the fine clothing or the gold ring, but, like our Master, to regard with highest esteem and Christian love those who do the will of our Heavenly Father.—Rom. 12:16; James 2:1-5.

"God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is love with us made perfect [completed] that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he [God] is, so are we in this world." As God is love, and is so manifested to all his creatures, so ought we to be love, and thus to shine as lights in the world. And if in this world we become living embodiments and representatives of love, we may be confident that at the end of our course we will stand approved before Him who seeks above all things to see in us this likeness to himself.—1 John 4:16-18.

To fellowship the world is to walk in harmony with its ideas and to conform to its ways. In this sense we may not love it, but must be apart from it and in opposition to it. The way thus pointed out to us is, in some respects at least, a difficult way, and a lonely way; but it is the only way of peace and lasting happiness. This world with the lust thereof is rapidly passing away: it is hollow and unsatisfying and eventually leads to disaster and ruin; but those whose delight is in the Lord's way have blessed communion and fellowship with him. Their joys come from a source which the world cannot comprehend. They live on a higher plane, breathe a purer atmosphere and enjoy a holier, sweeter friendship than the world could ever offer.

But if any man in Christ descend from these high privileges to partake of the poor substitutes which the world has to offer, he is thereby proving his lack of appreciation, and hence his unworthiness of the heavenly things: the love of the Father is not in him; and he may well fear the verdict of the day of decision.—Z. '96: 66, 67.

The Forerunner of Christ

Luke 1: 5-17.

Golden Text—"And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."—Luke 1:76.

IN considering this familiar narrative we are reminded of the Lord's great care in preparing his chosen instruments for the various parts of his great work. Abraham's life was a long discipline of faith and patience; for he was to be the father of the faithful, a type of the fatherhood of God, and a worthy example to all his children, both those under the Law and those under the new covenant of grace.—Rom. 4:11-17.

Moses was specially prepared to be a leader, lawgiver and judge to Israel. Born under the humiliating conditions of bondage and the imperial sentence of death, he was providentially protected, preserved and adopted into the royal family, where he received a measure of that education necessary for his future service; and after that he had forty years more in the retirement of domestic life, which, under the operations of divine grace, hardened his virtues and mellowed the ardor of his temperament. Thus God gave to Israel a trained and experienced character as a leader. Similarly, suitable preparation for the positions they were to occupy or the work they were to do is very noticeable in other cases, both of Bible record and of subsequent history. Mark the case of Samuel, a child of prayer, devoted to the Lord from his infancy and trained in the service of the Lord under the care of Eli; and of Paul, called from his infancy, instructed in the law, and zealous toward God even while ignorantly persecuting the saints, verily thinking he did God service.

John the Baptist was another illustration. The preparations in this, as in most of these cases, began before he was born, in the hearts of his parents,—"They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Verse 6.) Consider also subsequent reformers known to all through the pages of history, and mark the providential leadings in their preparation for their work long before they could have any knowledge of the work that was before them. Consider also how the Lord has been preparing the Gospel Church for its Millennial work; and how he prepared the ancient worthies for their Millennial work in the earthly phase of the coming Kingdom; and so on through all the list of his "chosen vessels." The **"chosen vessel"** is always a **prepared vessel** for the service intended; and that the preparation is of God, and not of himself, is manifest from the fact that in every case it began long before the chosen one knew of the ends to be accomplished or the significance of the providential circumstances or the measures of discipline.

The principal preparation which God requires for every part of his honorable service is holiness of heart—devotedness to God and to his righteousness and truth, and abhorrence of all that is unholy, unclean. "Be ye **clean** that bear the vessels of the Lord." There are, however, some parts of the Lord's service which reflect no honor upon those engaged in it, though they do reflect honor upon the wisdom and power of God who is able to make even the wrath of his enemies to praise him, by his power to outgeneral and overrule their evil for good to his cause. For instance, Satan, and every other evil worker, whose evil devices are, by divine power, overruled for good of God, unwittingly serve some of the purposes of God—sometimes for the discipline of the children of God and sometimes for the revolutionizing of affairs in the world.

The prenatal influences upon John the Baptist were such that, from his birth, his heart was inclined toward God and holiness (verse 15); and the training and discipline of his life were such that at maturity he was ready for the work of introducing to Israel the long-promised Messiah. Of him it was foretold, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." Yes, he was a great man, a great preacher and a great prophet. Jesus said he was the greatest of all the prophets. (Matt 11:11.) But he was not great in the eyes of men. He was never a guest at the palace of Herod, but he was a prisoner in his prisons. He was not an esteemed orator in the Jewish synagogues, but he was "a voice crying in the wilderness." He was not arrayed in purple and fine linen, nor did he fare sumptuously every day, but his raiment was of camel's hair and a leathern girdle, and his meat was locusts and wild honey. And though, for a time, the multitudes were attracted by his preaching, he was soon abandoned by the people, imprisoned by the king, and finally beheaded in prison.

And yet John was truly a great man: for he was "great in the sight of the Lord." He was great in the sense that he that ruleth his own spirit according to the principles and precepts of the divine Word is greater than he that taketh a city. (Prov. 16:32.) All the natural aspirations and human ambitions were made subservient to his one mission of introducing his cousin, Jesus of Nazareth, a man of humble birth and circumstances, as the Messiah, to whom he knew the gathering of the people would be after he had accomplished his mission of introducing him. (Gen. 49:10.) But John was pleased to have it so, and declared that in performing this service for his cousin according to the flesh, and thus accomplishing his part in the divine purpose and prophecy, his joy was fulfilled. (John 3:29.) And, by the eye of faith discerning in the humble Nazarene the Son of God, he said to the people, "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" "He must increase, but I must decrease."—Luke 3:16; John 1:29; 3:30.

It was this meekness, this complete self-abnegation and singleness of purpose to accomplish the righteous will of God, that constituted the moral greatness of John. And because he was in that attitude of heart where the Lord could use him he was privileged to be the greatest, the most highly honored, of all the prophets, in that he was chosen to introduce, to Israel and the world, the Anointed Son of God, the Redeemer and future King of the whole earth. Thus he became a great man, a great preacher of righteousness and truth, the greatest of all the prophets, and one of the heirs of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God.

What a profitable lesson is in this for all who would seek true greatness—to be "great in the sight of the Lord." It calls to mind that wise admonition of the Apostle, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. 5:6.) The way of the cross, the way of humiliation and self-abasement, is the way to the crown, to that true honor that cometh from God only. Where now is the honor of the great ones of earth who have passed away—the Caesars, the Herods, the Alexanders and Napoleons; the Jewish scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the law and Rabbis? and where all the reverend Popes and Cardinals and Bishops and Priests of the great Apostasy who proudly flourished in their day? They have all come to naught, and in the Millennial judgment they will come forth to shame and confusion of face, stripped of all their honors. But those truly great ones—"great in the sight of the Lord"—are reserved unto honor and glory and power at the appearing and Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Let the lesson come home to each of our hearts, —"He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Patiently submit to the humbling now, and hopefully and joyfully wait for the glory to be revealed by and by in all the faithful. This is not the time nor place for rewards, but for discipline and service, for the development of character, for making ready for the future exaltation, that we may appear without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, joint heirs of our Redeemer.—Z. '96:10, 11.

The Just Shall Live By Faith

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul."—*Heb. 10:38, 39.*

THERE is a solemn significance about these words of the Apostle which the thoughtful Christian will not fail to perceive. Those addressed are not worldly people, but consecrated believers, justified by faith in Christ as their Redeemer. By faith they have passed from death unto life; to them old things have passed away and all things have become new; they are new creatures in Christ Jesus; they are sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that they suffer with him, following in his footsteps of self-sacrifice, even unto death. They are begotten again to a hope of life (eternal), to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away—an inheritance, however, into which they are not immediately ushered, but which is reserved in heaven for them.

The promises of God made to this class are exceeding great and precious, and if they are really believed they cannot fail to powerfully influence the life; but if they are not received, it is manifest that they can have no power over the life. And more, if they be not fully believed, if they be not personally appropriated, they are not applicable, and no one can hope for anything in them. This is clearly intimated in the above words of the Apostle—"Now the just shall live by faith." It is not enough that, by faith, we receive the first impulse of life, but, having passed from death unto life, by the same means, we must **continue** to receive and appropriate spiritual nourishment, that we may grow thereby: we must walk by faith, following the leading of the holy spirit through the Word of Truth.

In this way of faith there is much of present privilege, as well as future prospect. It is the way in which we may enjoy the fellowship and the abiding presence of our Lord Jesus and our Heavenly Father, in which we may have intimate personal communion with them,and in which we may also have the witness of the holy spirit to our adoption and continued acceptance as sons of God, and the comfort of the Scriptures, the communion of saints, and the blessed inspiration, assistance and encouragement of all the means of grace. These present privileges, together with the glorious hopes they inspire and keep alive within us, are the meat which we have to eat which the world knows not of, enabling us to live a new life apart from the world apart from its spirit and its fellowship. This is what it is to walk by faith. It signifies a course of life quite contrary to the usual order of the world, which is to walk by sight and after the desires of the flesh. Men of the world look at the things that are seen: they judge of their relative values, but only with reference to temporal interests, entirely ignoring their eternal interests and the claims of the Creator upon them. Lacking faith in the divine Word, they lack substantial hope beyond the present; and upon their own judgment of the relative values of earthly prizes and their hopes of winning them, they exercise themselves in their pursuit, leaving the questions of the future and of present responsibility to God practically out of consideration.

But not so is it with the true child of God. He walks by faith and not by sight: he looks not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are unseen (2 Cor. 4.18), ever bearing in mind that the things that are seen are temporal, uncertain and unsatisfactory, while the things that are unseen are eternal, sure to the faithful, and of inestimable value. He is living, not for the present, but for the future—for the things revealed to the eye of faith in the promises of God, all of which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to them that believe. In this life of faith the motives, hopes, aims, ambitions and joys are all of a higher, nobler order than those of the world; but they are such as depend entirely upon faith. If the Christian's faith be overthrown he must of necessity to that extent cease to live the life of faith; that is, he will cease to be actuated by the same motives, etc., which his faith previously inspired. And, if through unfaithfulness, his spiritual vision has become dim, so that he can no longer see or rightly estimate the value of spiritual things, the world, the flesh and the devil are still busy presenting allurements and deceptions to lead him farther and farther away from God, in whose favor alone is life.

Weariness in well doing and desire for the rewards of unfaithfulness are first steps in drawing back from the way of faith, and also from the favor of God. In the light of our text, this drawing back is a most serious matter. The intimation of verse 39 is that it is a drawing back unto perdition, destruction—"If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

The drawing back may at first be a very slight departure from the narrow way of sacrifice—only a looking back, perhaps, with a sigh for the things behind, a little slowing up of speed in the race set before us: then a little disposition to compromise the truth in favor of the cravings of the fallen nature. Thus the way is prepared for the arts of the tempter, who is quick to note our weak points, and to take advantage of them in a manner best suited to our case. Subtle errors are brought to bear against the judgment: pleasing allurements, with a show of righteousness, are presented to the fleshly mind: and, almost imperceptibly, the soul forgets its "first love" for the Lord, and its first zeal in his service, and drifts away from the truth and the spirit of it, being no longer led of the holy spirit of God.

Few indeed are the children of God who have never been tempted in this direction: for we all have the treasure of the new nature "in earthen vessels," and between the new and the old natures there is a constant warfare; and only by continued vigilance can the new nature keep the old in abeyance. In the wearisome life-long struggle we often need our Father's chastening hand to guide and keep us in the way. "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" By instruction, discipline, experience, he leads us on, and if at heart our disposition is to be led of the spirit—to gratefully receive the instruction, humbly accept the discipline, and meekly profit by the experience, then will the Lord have pleasure in leading us on from grace to grace and from victory unto victory. To merely stand and battle on the defensive is **very** wearisome, and gains no victory. To gain the victory we must not only put on the armor of God, but we must be heroes in the strife, and wage an **aggressive** warfare upon the lusts of the eye and flesh and pride of life and all the foes of righteousness and purity. **Love**—love for the Lord, for the truth and for righteousness—must inspire us, or we shall never be victors. Love alone will keep us faithful even unto death, and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Where fervent love rules in the heart it implies that the heart is **fully submitted** to the Lord, and that means that nine-tenths of the battle is already won. But even then, as the Apostle says (Jude 21), we must **keep** ourselves in the love of God, in watchfulness and prayer and zeal; and grace will abound where love abounds.

In such faithful obedience to the truth, and earnest endeavor to conform to its principles, the way and the truth grow more and more precious, and our willing feet with joy are led in the paths of righteousness and peace—into life everlasting.

The life of faith is an individual matter, as well of the heart as of the head. It is far more than an acceptance of doctrines which we consider Scriptural and therefore true; it is the assimilation of that which we have proved to be the truth, so that its principles become our principles, and its promises our inspiration. This is what it is to "believe to the saving of the soul." "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And however we may realize our insufficiency of ourselves to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil in this seemingly unequal contest, let us remember, for our encouragement, that he who has begun a good work in us will carry it on to completion, if we humbly submit ourselves to his leading and discipline. Our Lord's promise is that he will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure. Let us hold fast our faith and our confidence in his sure word of promise—hold the truth in righteousness and faithfulness, and we shall not be of them who draw back and mind earthly things.—Z. '95:92, 93.

Consolation

"Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him."—Psa. 37:3-7.

WHILE the Word of God abounds in precepts and admonitions, in warnings and instructions, and while it lifts high the standard of moral excellence—so high that in our weak and fallen condition we cannot attain unto it, and in our efforts to do so in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation we must of necessity encounter the wrath of all the powers of darkness strongly entrenched in the hearts of fallen fellow-men, this same blessed Word comes to the faithful children of God in the very midst of this battle of life with sweet and refreshing consolation.

Consolation! What is it? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the cross, you who have never made an honest endeavor to withstand the powers of darkness, to fight the good fight of faith, to stem the current of your own fallen nature's tendencies, or to contend earnestly for truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of divine consolation? It is the balm for wounded spirits on the battle fields of time; the cooling draught for fainting souls hard pressed by the relentless foe; the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of a noble contender for truth and righteousness; the gentle whisper of hope and courage when the heart and flesh begin to fail—that is consolation, divine consolation, the only consolation that has any virtue of healing and refreshing in it. But it is reserved only for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world's favor, and of the downward tendencies of the carnal nature, can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

It is to the faithful soldiers of the Lord that the above words of the Psalmist are addressed—to the persecuted, tempted and tried. Hear them, tempest-tossed and fainting souls: they were long ago penned by the Lord's prophet for your edification—"Fret not thyself," but "trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." How strong is the Lord, how wise and good! His promises have never failed to those that put their trust in him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, and that the opposition from within and without is very strong; but it is when we are weak—when we thus realize our own incompetency—that we may be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Let us endeavor to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, and then lay hold of the Lord's strength to help us pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of God; for "he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust," "he knows that we have the treasure of the new nature in earthen vessels, and therefore it is that, while we strive to overcome, we have his proffered sympathy and aid and the imputed righteousness of Christ for our all-sufficient covering. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land; and verily thou shalt be fed." Our food and shelter will be sure; he will never leave nor forsake his own, but will make all things work together for good to them.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." This delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to trust in the Lord; but it is when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to delight in him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the divine care and love are specially seen in the guidance of our way: in a word, when we come to feel that the Father and the Son have so clearly manifested themselves to us that we can recognize their abiding presence with us. Ah! then it is that we begin to delight ourselves in the Lord. Then, however dark may be the way, or however heavy may be the storm that rages about us, the balm of divine consolation is always there, so that the child of God, though often troubled on every side, is not distressed; though perplexed, he is never in despair; though cast down, he is not destroyed; and though persecuted, he is never forsaken.

To delight thus in the Lord is to have the affections centered in him; it is to have the heart in such sympathy with righteousness and truth as to see in God the fountain of all goodness and truth, the one altogether lovely. The Psalmist expresses such an attitude of heart when, personifying our Lord Jesus, he said, "I delight to do thy will," O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." And again, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." And again, when he says, "O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is . . . . Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. . . . My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me."—Psa. 63.

Such an experience springs only from the felt consolations of divine grace in times of sore and pressing need, and however great the afflictions or the trials of faith, patience and endurance that lead to such an acquaintance with God, there is great cause for rejoicing in them; for

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

When the heart has been thus centered in God, it is its most natural impulse to commit its way to him. As one has beautifully expressed it—

"We'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
We'd rather walk by faith with him
Than go alone by sight."

And how precious is the promise to those who thus learn to trust in the Lord and go on doing good, no matter how obstinate or fierce may be the persecution it may excite, and who delight in the Lord and confidently commit their way to his loving wisdom. Surely they shall have the desires of their heart, and no good thing will he withhold from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in his own good time their righteousness, however misrepresented and evil spoken of now, shall be brought forth as the light — clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their hearts, as the noonday. And even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, verily we shall be fed, both with the temporal bread and with the bread of heaven for our spiritual sustenance. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

But the Psalmist adds one more important word of counsel to the Lord's beloved children. It is this—"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Do not make the mistake of expecting him to give you the desires of your heart at the very instant of your request; to make your path peaceful, easy and pleasant as soon as you commit your way to him; and at once to bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. He has not promised to do that. **Time** is necessary for the working out of his kind providences in our individual affairs; for God works on philosophical principles and for lasting and blessed results. So—

"If not to-day, be thou content, poor heart!
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

This waiting, under severe trial or affliction, will indeed be a blessing in disguise, if the soul be rightly exercised unto patience, endurance, faith, hope, meekness, long-suffering, kindness and true Christian fortitude. And it will be in the darkness of these waiting seasons that the blessed stars of hope will shine the brightest, and the bright Morning Star, the harbinger of day, will shed his beams into the deepest recesses of our hearts. "They that wait upon the Lord," says the Prophet (Isa. 40:31), "shall **renew their strength**; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

Blessed promise! and, to the praise of his abounding grace, his saints of the past and present all bear ample testimony of their fulfilment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows our thirst to assuage?
Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age."

—Z. '95:165-167.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

There is no room for foolishness or lightness, or frivolity. God is testing every power we possess to see whether we know what we have said in our consecration vow, to prove whether we were sincere and meant it all, to prove whether to any extent we overstated ourselves and did not mean entire devotion to Him.—Z. '13:265.

◆

If the Lord lays a cross upon us, will it be borne with **gladness** or with **murmuring**? If the former, we shall have a blessing, even though we had not sought the cross, even if it had been forced upon us. When trials and difficulties come, and crosses are forced upon us, happy are we if we appreciate the opportunity of cross-bearing, recognizing that this is closely connected with the crowning. The cross will not be too heavy for us. The Lord will bear the heavy end of it; and our experiences will be only such as will be for our good and will work out for our blessing.—Z. '13:120.

◆

We are living in the "hour of temptation" (Rev. 3:10), in the "evil day" in which this Age will be merged into the New Dispensation. We surely know that "Judgment begins with the House of God." We surely know that it is to extend eventually to all Christendom. If the Judgment, or trial, or fiery testing of the world, will mean to them "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," it will surely mean a time of fiery trial to the Household of Faith, with whom it begins. The question is, "Who shall be able to stand?" The answer is, the holy—the sanctified in Christ Jesus.

The spirit of rebellion against all laws, rules, regulations, human and Divine, seems to be in the very air we breathe. It is a time therefore for the child of God to be seeking peace and pursuing it increasingly, as far as possible with all, acting as peacemakers and not as strife breeders. It is a time when many seem prompted to offer incense which the Lord has not commissioned them to offer. The spirit of ambition, rivalry and desire to be greatest amongst the Lord's people is one of the most dangerous foes of the Church, not only to those over whom they rule, but also to those who will be the rulers and teachers. The lesson to every one of us is, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." —Z. '13:200.

◇

One writer has said, "There is but one man who can believe himself free from envy, and it is he who has never examined his own heart." Undoubtedly this evil root of selfishness is to be found in every imperfect son and daughter of Adam, whether it is flourishing under favorable conditions or dormant for lack of them, or from the overmastering power of grace. Only the heart that is aflame with love for God supreme and for his neighbor as himself is in a condition so sterile as respects envy that the latter has no opportunity for development. With an abatement of our love for God and man comes a corresponding increase of favorable influence for the development of this root of envy and its concomitants of anger, hatred, strife and every evil work.—Z. '07:106.

◇

FORMAL PRAYER

"I often say my prayers;
But do I always pray?
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?
I may as well kneel down
And worship gods of stone,
As offer to the living God
A prayer of words alone;
For words without the heart
The Lord will never hear,
Nor will He to those lips attend
Whose prayers are not sincere."
—Z. '13:89.

◇

We have learned, too, that sometimes matters which seem to be dark clouds and troubles amongst the brethren are really, under divine providence, messengers of blessing, which, rightly received, do good in showing the brethren their own weaknesses and imperfections, and in leading them to seek more and more of the grace of God to overcome these, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God.—Z. '01:6.

Evidently the more the king thought respecting Daniel and his God the more his faith in that direction increased. He spent a sleepless night, and arose early in the morning and went to the den of lions and cried in a voice full of sympathy and sorrow, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?" And is it not true at the present time that those who are not of the consecrated class sometimes have a considerable faith in our God and in his protecting power, and in us as his children? It is well that we keep this in memory—well that we recognize that our worldly friends are watching us to see to what extent our God delivers us from the difficulties and trials of life's pathway. We have known many instances where the strength and fortitude granted to the consecrated ones to endure trials and difficulties and hardships unmurmuringly has told the worldly friends, louder than any professions could tell them, of the power of our God and of the peace of God which passeth understanding, which rules in our hearts. Thus it should always be. The trials and difficulties of life shall not overwhelm us if we trust in the Lord. Our hearts may be joyful in him notwithstanding persecutions and difficulties. Thus the Philippian jailor perceived that the God of Paul and Silas was able to deliver them from being utterly cast down by their experiences when in the stocks suffering from the beatings they had recently received. Their songs in the night told that their God was able to deliver them.—Z. '05:299.

◇

BRUISING THE SERPENT'S HEAD

In pronouncing the curse against the serpent—against evil—the Lord declared, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." The Scriptures show us clearly that this divine prophecy is to be fulfilled, that our Lord Jesus is the seed of the woman through whom the blessing shall come, and that his Church, his Bride is to be joint-heir with him in the suffering incidental to the attainment of the honorable position of Joint-heirs with him also in the great work of delivering mankind from all the evils that have come upon us through Satan, through the serpent. The head and the heel are referred to symbolically as representing vital and non-vital portions of the body.

Thus the Christ, Jesus the Head and the Church his members, throughout this Gospel age have all suffered something from the serpent, from evil, from Satan, but under God's providences their sufferings are not serious, not deadly—they are wounded in the heel, so to speak. This seed class is begotten of the holy Spirit, New Creatures; hence nothing that can come to them in their earthly, human experiences, can prove injurious to their spiritual welfare. All the bruising of the heel, under the Lord's supervision, shall work together for good to the development of character, to the preparation of the injured members for the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory by and by. Thus it has been with our dear Redeemer, who being wounded for our transgressions has been highly exalted of the Father. We also who are sharers with him in his sufferings, ignominy, death, are to be sharers in his glory.—Z. '07:24.

Old Corn Gems

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Take Heed to Yourselves

ST. PAUL'S words, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28), were never more worthy of our attention than now. . . . . We see clearly that the "Evil Day" is upon us, the time of testing those already blest and enlightened. It is not, therefore, merely a question of who shall be blest with the ear to hear the message of Present Truth, but additionally, "Who shall be able to withstand in that **evil day,** and having done all to stand" the final tests (Eph. 6:13), and be acclaimed—"More than conqueror through him who loved us" and bought us with his precious blood.

We perceive the attack of the Adversary, referred to in our caption, in every direction;—the grievous wolves of error and ambition among "your own selves." We must sound the alarm and tell you that "the hour of temptation" is come—the one for which we have been preparing. With the knowledge granted us let us not slumber at the critical moment; but soberly and prayerfully and faithfully meet the situation.

Let us remember that our **knowledge** means an added responsibility, and that it will avail us **nothing** except as it is combined and active with **Love,** which is the bond of perfectness, the fulfilling of the divine law or requirement. How many blessings the Lord has granted us, and opportunities to put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to withstand the very trial now upon us!

Wisely did the Apostle first say, **"Take heed to yourselves."** That is our first responsibility. We should each first examine our own hearts to see whether we are to any degree moved by jealousies, or ambitions, or any selfish motive. To do this effectively we must not measure ourselves with others, nor yet by our own imperfect standards, but by the Lord's standard—Perfect Love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all** thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy being, with all thy strength: and thou shalt love thy neighbor [and especially thy brother in the Lord] as thyself." Oh! what brotherly-kindness, what tenderness of word and act, what sympathy of thought for each other's weaknesses, what appreciation of each other's better traits, what long-suffering kindness and patient forbearance in love, what care for each other's welfare, rights and liberties, as for our own, this would imply and produce!

"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith!" writes the same Apostle. Doctrinal soundness is very important, but not enough; we must also be "in the faith" in the sense of **exercising faith in the Lord**—in all of life's affairs, and especially in all the affairs of his Church. If ever we allow **expediency** to swerve us from the Scriptural program in the affairs of the Church it manifests that we are **not "in the faith"** as God designed. For confidence in God and his overruling wisdom and power would never permit expediency to say, "Let us do evil that good may follow"—Let us take an unscriptural course for the best interests of the Lord's cause. The faith dictates that to **obey God** is better than sacrifice, and that he is able to make all things work for good to all who love and serve him.

Dearly Beloved, let us, then, remember that this is our test and now our testing time; and let **love** for the Lord and his brethren and his Word be constantly in command of our lips, of our conduct and, above all, of our hearts. "If ye do these things ye shall never fail, but so an entrance shall be granted us into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

What is thus true of all, is specially true of those honored with a special stewardship in the Church—the Elders—in this the hour of trial that is upon the whole world and peculiarly upon "the very elect."—Rev. 3:10; Z. '07:53, 54.

The tests of love and loyalty are not always great deeds, though, if we love with all our hearts, they will be as great and as far reaching in their influence as our talents and opportunities will permit; but the prompt and ready use of even the smallest talent is carefully noted by our loving Lord in his book of remembrance. **And not the imperfect rendering of service, but the perfect intention with which it is rendered, is faithfully recorded.**—Z. '92:263.

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There is but one table of the Lord as there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.—Z. '07:91.

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It is indispensable to those who have reached the mark of perfect love that they shall keep actively engaged in the service of the Lord, laying down their lives for the brethren; because he who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, what assurance hath he that he really loves God, whom he hath not seen? (1 John 4:20.)—Z. '01:10.

GENERAL CONVENTION

All Standfast Bible Students are heartily invited to attend the next General Convention, which will be held at Bellingham, Wash., on July 2nd, 3rd and 4th, at the New Moose Hall, 1323 Railroad Ave. Two meals will be provided daily for all conventioners, by the local Ecclesia. Reception Committee will meet all boats and trains. For further information, please write to Bro. Leon K. Pattison, 1225 High Street, Bellingham, Wash. Bros. Heard and Palmer are expected to serve at this Convention.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER FIFTY-NINE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Necessity of Self-Control

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls."—Proverbs 25:28.

IN OLDEN times cities were particularly places of refuge, where the inhabitants of the country congregated for protection. When the earth was less populous and the necessity for government was less appreciated than now, any marauding band was likely to take possession of whatever was open to their attack. So the cities of ancient times had strong walls. This was true, we remember, of Jerusalem and Jericho. It was true of ancient Troy, and also true of cities in Europe. In Vienna, the old wall of the city still stands; and so with other walled cities.

But as improved forms of government were adopted, cities no longer needed protecting walls. The police nowadays constitute a wall of protection. Our text is referring to a wall such as was formerly used, and to a city which had become dilapidated and the wall broken down. King Solomon gives this as a picture of a human being who has no rule over his own spirit. He is unable to protect himself against evil influences from within or without, as a result of having suffered his will to be broken down.

All mankind are born with more or less of determination. Some have this in a very marked degree; others in a lesser degree; no one, we believe, is wholly without this quality of will, purpose. But we find that whether our wills are strong or weak they need direction. Lessons in the directing of our wills come from various quarters; for instance, we have the laws of the city, laws of the state, laws of the country, which direct the individual as to what he may do and may not do—particularly what he may not do. As one looks into the source and history of these laws, he finds that they represent the accumulated will of a long period. Mankind now have very good laws. We have often thought it strange that fallen men have been able to produce such just laws as we find on the statute books today.

But although very good laws may be made, yet people may ignore the law. A jury may set aside all law. A judge may pervert the law. Thus things that are unlawful may become a practise of an individual or a town or a city. To cultivate in one's self a lawless disposition is to cultivate the spirit of anarchy—a spirit of indifference to the rights and interests of others. There are some who manifest reasonable respect for the laws of man because necessity or public opinion makes it impossible or inadvisable to do otherwise, who may at heart be anarchists as regards the Law of God, the great Law-giver of the Universe.

Sad Perversion of Sound Judgment

To yield ourselves to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us, is disastrous, whether we are weak-minded or strong-minded. The weak-minded have their limitations; the strong-minded have the excess of power, and are more potent for evil. We hear a great many say, when they have lost control of their temper, or have been petulant or morose or ill-natured or discourteous, Well, that's my way; I do not mean any harm. They acknowledge the matter, and seek to justify themselves by saying that it is natural to them. But no human being should live according to what is natural to his or her fallen nature. A being created in the image of God, and still retaining some traces of his original Godlikeness, should live above the plane of the lower animals, which follow merely their natural instincts and passions.

Some seem to glory in what they are pleased to term their high spirit, which will always stand up for their "rights." They are not so weak and childish as to let anybody run over them! If they do not like what others do or say, they will tell just what they think of the others. They have some force of character! Oh, how the great Adversary and his hosts, together with the perverse fallen nature, can deceive and mislead and blind the judgment that is not guided and instructed by the only true Guide—the Word of God! How they can make that which is noble, and truly strong and Godlike appear weak and puerile—and make that which is weak, base, selfish and animal appear strong and manly!

All Need Regulation by Some Standard

All should recognize that the inclinations, the impulses and the preferences of the fallen nature of man are often contrary to that which is right, noble, truly desirable. All should be regulated by some **standard,** either the civil standard by which the world is governed, or the standard of God. But one might live up to the letter of a law and yet be violating its spirit. The Law of God is the very highest standard of law. And the spirit of God's Law is embodied in the Golden Rule. This standard the whole world recognizes as right; and surely the Lord's people should measure all their conduct and their words, yea, their very thoughts, by this standard. Thus they will be rulers over their own spirit.

The word **spirit** in the text under consideration represents the mind, the impulses of one's nature. We are to rule our mind, our natural impulses. This means that if a thought present itself to the mind, or if we feel a certain impulse, we should be quick to perceive the nature of the thought or impulse; and if it is not in harmony with the principles of righteousness or with our covenant as children of God, we should at once resist it. If we are unable to do this successfully of ourselves, as is often the case, the heart should be promptly lifted to the Lord for His promised grace to help in time of need. If we feel an impulse toward a certain action or course, we should carefully weigh the matter, and decide as to its righteousness or propriety in the circumstances, looking to our unfailing Source of help for guidance.

The world would say that this is too exacting—that they would have more pleasure in doing their own will. But we know that in doing their own will they frequently get into difficulty. A Christian has covenanted not to follow his own will; he has given up his own will, and has taken the will of God instead. The more advanced the Christian, the more should we expect that he would be able to rule his spirit—"casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every **thought**" to the will of God in Christ. And if we rule our mind, our thoughts, we shall rule our tongue. If the thought were not in the mind, the tongue would not utter it.

There is a grave danger of saying things, or of doing things, under a momentary impulse, that our heart, our consecrated judgment, would not approve; hence the necessity of bringing our thoughts and impulses into subjection. We are to consider, What would be the effect of my words or my action upon another? Would it bring harm? Would it be an injury, or cause needless pain, for me to say or do this thing, or would it do good? By thus scrutinizing himself, by thus taking himself in hand, and ruling his spirit, the child of God is showing his earnest desire of heart to be pleasing to the Lord and true to his covenant. And those who learn to rule their own spirit according to the will of the Father are the ones whom He will be pleased to make joint-heirs with His Son in His Kingdom.

How to Attain Strength of Character

In what way can a Christian cultivate this control of his own spirit? At first the individual has not the power to control himself in everything; but as he learns to exercise self-control in the little things, more and more doing what he can in this direction, in thought and word and deed, he will gain in strength of character. We should remember the story of the man who wished to develop his muscles, and who for this reason began to practise each day in lifting a calf. He commenced when the calf was very young, and he lifted it day by day for weeks and months. In due time the calf had become an ox, and he was then able to lift the ox. His daily practise had gradually strengthened his muscles; they increased in strength with the increase in the weight of the animal, until he was strong enough to lift the full-grown ox.

And so with the Christian in his character-development: If we daily practise self-control, we shall gradually attain a strong character along this line, which will be of inestimable advantage to us in our Christian warfare.

Moral Strength More Desirable Than Physical

There is no place where the proof of our ability to rule our spirit is better shown than in our own home. With husband and wife, with parent and child, with brother and sister, this is an important matter. The battle with self is the greatest battle we have to fight; and the Word of God declares that "he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." He is greater because he has learned to exercise the will, the determination, of a true character in the right direction, in the direction of control of self.

Moral strength is infinitely nobler and more to be desired than the greatest degree of physical strength or the keenest strategy. And it is only after we have conquered ourselves, only after we have become master of our own flesh, only after we have cast out the beam from our own eyes, have subdued anger, malice, hatred and strife in our own hearts, that we are able, by means of these severe battles with our own weaknesses, to assist the brethren, to assist our neighbors, to aid them—by our example—in overcoming their besetments and infirmities.

We Must Fight to the End

To rule one's own spirit, mind, disposition, implies a conflict similar in some respects to that of taking a city; for no matter where we begin, we find entrenched within us many armed and opposing powers. They have possession by **heredity**—they are there as the result of the fall. And if we have passed the days of youth they are the more strongly entrenched, and it requires the greater skill and generalship to rout them. But whether one has begun early or late, he that would succeed in ruling his own spirit must "war a good warfare." He must "fight the good fight of faith," down to the **very end** of the present existence.

If the child of God would be the victor in this fight, he must not only storm all the fortresses of inherited evils, which seem to be a part of his very nature, but having gained possession and taken his seat upon the throne of this symbolic city (his will), he must thereafter be continually on the defensive; for the old enemies are constantly on the alert, and ever and anon seek to regain possession, so that he who continues to rule his own spirit is one who has not only routed the enemy, Sin, from the throne of his being, but is continuing to keep him at bay.

This ruling of one's spirit is by no means an easy task; and, as in the illustration, it cannot be done single-handed and alone. Consequently, the wise "general" will invoke all the assistance at his command, remembering the words of the Apostle—"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." (Ephesians 6:12.) These powers of the world, the flesh and the Devil are closely allied, and therefore he who plans for conquest and an established reign thereafter, must seek alliance with another and a stronger Power. This Power is tendered to all who earnestly undertake this great work. It is none other than the Almighty Arm of our God, who says to those who accept His strength, greater is He that is with you—that is for you—than all they that be against you; gird yourselves like men, be strong, fear not.—See 1 John 4:4; Isaiah 35:4.

The ruling of this symbolic city—one's own spirit—will never be accomplished until first the "commanding general," the Will, has positively decided to change his allegiance from Sin to God, and to rout the rebels who resist the change. But, in the words of a trite saying, "Where there's a **will**, there's a **way**"—for **good** or for **evil**. God will assist, through various agencies, toward **good**; Satan, through various agencies, toward **evil**. If the Will says, **"It must be done,"** it calls in the needed, available help; and forthwith it sets all the other faculties of the mind at work, first to subjugate, and then to rule and regulate the entire being. Conscience is commanded to keep a vigilant watch over all the mental operations. Judgment, under the influence of Conscience, must decide as to the righteousness or the unrighteousness of any matter, and report to the Will, which is under the same moral influence.

Three Departments of Mental Government

Thus we have three departments of government established—the legislative, which should always be the Conscience; the judicial, the Judgment; and the executive, the Will. In every well-regulated and righteously-ruled mind, all the other faculties must make their appeal to this Congress and, as the Will insists, in due and proper order. Their appeal to the Will to execute their desires before submitting them first to Conscience, and then to Judgment, should never be tolerated; but when approved there, they may freely urge their claims upon the executive power, the Will. The Will governs; and if the Will be weak, the government is slack, and the appetites, passions and unholy ambitions take advantage of the situation. They seek to overbalance Judgment and to silence Conscience, and loudly clamor to the Will to have their own wild way.

If the Will be weak, but strive to keep itself under the influence of Conscience and sound judgment, it will be fitful and irregular in its rulings; and the government will be unstable and ultimately wholly at the mercy of the fallen appetites, passions and ambitions. The condition of such a soul is one of anarchy which, unless its wild course be speedily arrested, will hurriedly sweep the whole being toward destruction. It is all-important, therefore, that the Will be entirely consecrated to God and righteousness; and that it strengthen itself in the Lord, and in His name and strength rule with a firm hand, cultivating as its assistants Conscience and Judgment, in determining the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, as expressed in His Word. —Romans 12:2.

The Will has the most difficult office to fill; and the Lord's commendation will be to the man of resolute Will, instructed by an enlightened Conscience and Judgment. Blessed is the Christian who sets his house in order, and who maintains that order to the end of his days. The thorns and thistles of his old nature have been exterminated; the beautiful flowers of peace, righteousness and love have been cultivated; and now they flourish and adorn his character. The warring elements of his old nature have been brought into subjection to his New Will. As the poet Whittier has beautifully expressed it:

"All the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm;
And all the angles of the strife
Now rounding into calm."

—Z. '14:195-197.

"The Issues of Life"

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Proverbs 4:23.

ORIGINALLY man was created in God's image and likeness. As a result of the fall our hearts are not perfect, but are prone to sin. The Lord invited us to give our hearts, our affections, to Him: "My son, give Me thine heart." (Prov. 23:26.) God has provided the Channel whereby He can restore us to the relationship of sons, that Channel being the Lord Jesus. After we have accepted the Lord's proposition and given Him our hearts, we become the Lord's dear children, as the Apostle expresses it. The next thing is to keep the heart in loyalty, in full submission to the Divine will. The necessity for thus keeping the heart is manifest. Even though our hearts are loyal to the Lord, yet we are surrounded by adverse conditions. The world, the flesh and the Devil are assailing our hearts, which need, therefore, to be watched continually. As the Apostle says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." (2 Cor. 4:7.) We have these adverse tendencies, or conditions, to deal with.

God is not judging His people merely in respect to their flesh, in respect to the deeds of life. These are more or less imperfect. He has so fixed the matter that the result of that which springs from the heart, for which the heart is responsible, is life or death. If the issues are right, the result will be life eternal. If the issues are wrong, the result will be death, unworthiness of life. It is not merely the issues of our **conduct** that determine the everlasting result, life or death, but the issues of our **hearts.** They not only affect the present life, in the cleansing or polluting of those with whom we come in contact, but they determine or settle the matter as to whether or not we shall have life.

Thus the issues of the heart constitute the decisive test. The statement does not say that the antithesis of life is death: but the question is, Shall **we** have **life?** We have already been in death. We can have life only through the appointed Channel, the Redeemer. If we accept the issue of life and receive God's favor of life everlasting, we avoid the other issue, death everlasting. Not only is this question decided by the issue of our hearts, but it is also true that those who attain the condition of life during this Age will attain either the glory of the divine nature or membership in the "great company." They will be either of the Royal Priesthood or the servants of this priesthood. Hence, a great deal depends upon the issues of the heart. Therefore, we should desire the things approved, the things of God. We should seek to have the very best achievable issue, or result, to attain to the prize of our calling in Christ Jesus!

Must Root Out of Our Hearts All Love of Sin

It is not sufficient that we acknowledge sin in its various forms to be evil, and that we resolve that we will strive against it because it is under the Lord's ban; in addition to this we are to root out of our hearts every longing, every desire for everything not thoroughly approved by the Lord. Oh, what a cleansing this would mean in the hearts and lives, and especially in the thoughts of many who have named the name of Christ! Many who fail to note this point find themselves continually beset with temptations because, while **outwardly** avoiding gross immoralities, they **secretly harbor sympathies for things condemned,** desiring that they might have them, if only they were not forbidden.

The more attention we give to this subject the more we will be convinced from our own personal experiences of the truth of the Scriptural declarations respecting the beginnings of sin as **secret faults in the mind, the heart;** and the more we will appreciate the statement of our text, "Keep thy heart [mind, affections] with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

We are not to wonder that God has so constituted us as to permit temptations to come to our minds, nor are we to pray that we may have no temptations: for **if there were no such presentations, no such temptations, there could be no victories on our part,** no overcoming of sin and of the Wicked One. We know that for this very reason we are now in the School of Christ: not that we shall there be **shielded from all temptation,** but **that we may learn of the great Teacher how to meet the Tempter,** and by our Master's grace and help come off conquerors, victors in the strife against sin. **The degree of our success in this conflict will depend largely upon the keenness of our faith and trust in the great Teacher.** If we have confidence in His wisdom, we will follow closely His instructions and keep our hearts, minds, with all diligence. Faith in the Lord's wisdom and in His help in every time of need is necessary to us in order that we may be thoroughly obedient to Him; and hence it is written, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our **faith**"; that is, it will be by the **exercise of faith** and the **obedience which flows therefrom** that we will be enabled to come off conquerors and **"more than conquerors"** through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us.—1 John 5:4; Rom. 8:37.

We are not to seek Divine aid far in advance; as, for instance, to ask to be kept throughout the year to come, or month to come, or week to come; rather we ought to know that if we have made a covenant with the Lord and are His, He is near us at all times, in every trial, in every temptation; and that His assistance is ready to our use, if we will but **accept it and act accordingly.** Hence our prayers should be for help **in the time of need,** as well as general prayers for the Lord's blessing and care for each day.

The difficulty with many is that they are looking for some great battles instead of **averting the great battles** and keeping their minds cleansed from secret faults. The little battles, which are much more numerous, are principally the ones in which we gain the victories, with their ultimate rewards. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit [mind, will] than he that taketh a city."—Prov. 16:32.

Finally, the grand results of obedience to this counsel of the Lord, the grand attainment of those who have faithfully kept their hearts with diligence, is expressed in the words of the Psalmist, and may well be the repeated, earnest prayer of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus: "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. . . . Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."—Psa. 19:13, 14; Z. '11:396, 397.

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Words can never make manifest to uncircumcised hearts the blessedness of the privileges of the saints at "the table of the Lord," even amidst the trials and difficulties of the present life and its warfare with the powers of darkness. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over;" for the glorious fellowship with Christ hereafter has its joyful beginning even here, in the fellowship of his sufferings and his cross.—Z. '96:70.

The New Home in Canaan

Golden Text—"Thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee."—Deut. 8:10.

AFTER the forty years' sojourn of Israel in the wilderness they were now again on the borders of the promised land and about to enter it. All the rebellious adult generation had died. Only Joshua and Caleb and Moses remained; and even Moses, though faithful and loyal to God to the highest degree, could not enter the land of promise, because in presumptuously and without authority smiting a second time the rock whence flowed the water of life, instead of merely speaking to the rock as he was directed, he committed a sin which typified the sin unto death. The rock represented Christ who was smitten once for the world's benefit; but those who would crucify the Son of God afresh and again put him to an open shame shall not enter into the Canaan of the heavenly rest. Moses did not really commit that sin, but his presumptuous act being a type of it, he could not enter into Canaan, but must die in the wilderness, though he had come to the very borders and in sight of the goodly heritage.

How solemn this lesson to the Church for whose instruction those types were made! Yes, we may come even to the borders of the glorious inheritance of the saints; and not only so, but we may also lead others there, and yet ourselves be castaways and die the second death, if we cease to recognize the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ our Redeemer and Lifegiver.

Probably Moses knew nothing of the typical significance of the penalty of his rash act; but without a word of complaint he accepted the chastening of the Lord and made diligent haste to accomplish the work of the Lord for Israel before he should lie down to rest. There is a touching sweetness as well as a grandeur of nobility in the devotion of Moses to the Lord and to his work for Israel. When God bade him make ready to ascend the Mount to view the promised land and there to lie down and die alone, apart from all he had loved and labored for so long, Moses' only reply was an expression of deep concern for Israel—"And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation. . . . that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." (Num. 27:12-17.) And God regarded his request and appointed Joshua to succeed his beloved servant Moses.

Then Moses diligently applied himself to the completion of his work, giving his fatherly counsel to his beloved people in whose interests he had sacrificed every earthly good and for whom he had endured hardness—incessant toil and care and privation and reproach and weariness and vexation of spirit for forty eventful years. How tender and wise his counsel! In it all there is no vaunting of self, no boasting of his own faithfulness; but there are strong and earnest words of exhortation, encouragement, instruction and advice, the account of which read in the entire book of Deuteronomy.

If we read these memorable words so full of wisdom and counsel, forgetful of their import to the Church also, the antitypes of fleshly Israel, and merely as items of Jewish history, we miss discerning the very object of their record. "They are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world (the present evil world) are come." (1 Cor. 10:11.) Consider a few of these comforting thoughts in the light in which they shine to us, the spiritual antitypical Israel of God, to whom the promises and exhortations spoken directly to fleshly Israel apply in a wider and fuller sense.

Deut. 4:23. 24:30-40.—"Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God; . . . for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. [See also Heb. 12:29; 10:31.] If thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, . . . he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them [the Abrahamic covenant, of which the Gospel Church, as the spiritual seed of Abraham, are the chief inheritors.—Rom. 9:8; Gal. 3:29]. For ask now of the days that are past, . . . since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is [which God hath done for his spiritual Israel], or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire [out of the glorious manifestations of his adorable presence with the church] as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by proofs, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors like all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? [While in those days no wonders were greater than those wrought on behalf of fleshly Israel, they are eclipsed by the greater wonders wrought on behalf of spiritual Israel in their emancipation from the bondage of sin, and in their wonderful leading through all their wilderness way, beset as they have been by foes without and within, hotly pursued by Satan and tempted, tried and persecuted as they have been. What a miracle of grace is every child of God!]"

The text of this lesson is an exhortation to love and loyalty and obedience to God, and to steadfastness in his service. Let us ponder its propositions carefully, and let them sink deep into our hearts.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." It is not a mere passing sentiment of appreciation that the Lord desires of us: it is all-absorbing love that he desires—a love which delights in God, which meditates upon his law and strives patiently, and at the cost of any sacrifice, to please him. Such love is not natural to us: we must strive for it, pray for it and daily and hourly cultivate it.

Through Moses the Lord indicates how we

should endeavor to cultivate this love. It is by meditating upon his just and holy law, his precepts and instructions which manifest to us the glory of his character. Hear him: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be **in thine heart,** and thou shalt **teach them diligently** unto thy children, and shalt **talk of them when thou sittest in thine house,** and when thou **walkest by the way,** and when thou **liest down,** and when thou **risest up.** And thou shalt bind them for a sign **upon thy hand,** and they shall be as frontlets **between thine eyes.** And thou shalt write them **upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.**"

The Christian who abandons the daily reading of the Word of God and meditation upon its precepts is not a growing Christian. The precepts and promises of God are very rich; but they have no sweetness to the soul that does not keep them ever fresh before the mind and delight himself in them, and shape all his course in life in strict adherence to the principles therein set forth. Let us say with the Psalmist: "With **my whole heart** have I sought thee [Lord]. O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."—Psa. 119:10, 11.

Then let us weigh well the counsel of verses 10-12, as the principle applies to us with double force. "And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, . . . to give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not; vineyards and olive trees which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; **then beware lest thou forget the Lord** which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Beloved, shall the goodness of God ever cause us ungratefully to forget him? Many indeed are the forgetful recipients of his favors. How much of the divine bounty in spiritual things has been accorded to the children of God; yet even these blessings misused may be turned into a curse. The light misused may turn to darkness, and then, how great is that darkness! (Matt. 6:23.) If to serve the flesh we make merchandise of the truth received, ere long that inestimable blessing becomes our accuser before God and we are borne out of the light into the outer darkness. And those who thus go after other gods which their own perverse wills set up are liable to the penalty of verse 15 which, in its application to the reprobates from spiritual Israel, corresponds to the faithful warnings of the Apostle Paul in Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26-31.—Z. '95:183, 184.

Walk By This Rule

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy."—Gal. 6:16.

PEACE, rest of mind, tranquillity of soul, is the happiness that all men crave, yet seek for in vain, because they seek it where it cannot be found. God created man for his own pleasure (Rev. 4:11.; Isa. 43:7) and in his own image, so that man's true pleasure, happiness and peace should be found only in harmony, fellowship and sympathy with his Creator, that thus the fellowship of the Creator and the creature might be responsive. He wanted that love should respond to love, admiration to admiration, virtue to virtue, and grace to grace, in the Creator and the creature, as face answers to face in a glass. In this natural attitude of the Creator and the creature generous benevolence and filial gratitude combine in mutual happiness. God is happy in the realization and in the exercise of all the noble traits of his glorious character, which happiness is enhanced by appreciation of the same on the part of his creatures, and by manifestation in them of the same qualities and dispositions of mind and heart. And likewise man must both realize and exercise the noble endowments of his nature and form a character modeled after that of his heavenly Father and meeting his approval, if he would find that true happiness which consists in the approval of his own conscience and of his Creator and Judge, in whose favor is life, and "at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore."—Psa. 16:11.

True, all men have lost much of the original likeness of God, but this does not alter the fact that they still crave the happiness and peace which can never be found except under the natural, original relations to his Creator. No matter how deep a man may sink in sin, how far he may stray from the path of rectitude, how low and vile he may become, he still remembers that he is a man, a member of that noble though fallen race which God created in his own likeness, and he knows and feels his degradation. He knows that he was made for higher and nobler ends than those toward which he is ever tending, although he has neither inclination nor desire to strive toward those nobler ends, not having the fortitude to resist the inherited and long-cultivated bias of his fallen nature.

In this painful realization of the absence of true happiness and peace of mind and heart, men have sought for happiness and peace in ways in harmony with the more or less depraved tendencies of the fallen nature—in the poor substitutes which pride, ambition, strife, rivalry, wealth, fame, power, etc., have to offer; but the happiness they find in these is only delusive, and at most very short-lived. The bubble of success may burst in an instant, and the peace and happiness built upon it be utterly wrecked.

There is no peace, therefore, to any man except in the reestablished relationship between himself and his God. And since this relationship of sons can only be reestablished through Christ, there is no peace to any man out of Christ. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked." (Isa. 48:22.) And "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17): he has "passed from death unto life," and has found the peace which the world can neither give nor take away. He realizes himself a son and heir of God. And to these justified sons and heirs of this age God has not only granted his recognition, but also his special favor, in offering to them exceeding great and precious promises—to become sons of God on a higher plane, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, the conditions of which relationship are that we follow in his footsteps of sacrifice, even unto death.

Those who thus covenant with God are begotten of the spirit of God, and as many such as are thenceforth led of the spirit of God they are the recognized sons of God (Rom. 8:14), while those who fail to recognize, appreciate and accept the great favor offered, lose the benefit of their reckoned justification in this age.

It is to these new creatures, begotten and led of the spirit of God, that the words of our text are addressed—As many such as walk by this rule, peace be on them and mercy. The rule referred to is the rule of the new creature mentioned in the preceding verse—"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Forms and ceremonies are not the rule, but the new life itself, the new creature filled with the holy spirit of God and led of the spirit. "Walk in the spirit," says the Apostle, "and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other."—Gal. 5:16, 17.

To as many as walk by this rule are promised peace and mercy—mercy, because our best efforts to walk after the leading of the holy spirit will be imperfect; but God who judges our heart's desires and efforts is merciful and will not exact from us more than we are able to perform. And, therefore, notwithstanding our lameness and halting steps in following the lead of the spirit, he gives his blessed peace to all them that walk by this rule—the rule of the holy spirit, the rule of the new creature.

Now if any man be in Christ, a new creature, he has put away the old man—the carnal nature, which is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—with all his evil deeds, which the Apostle thus enumerates (Gal. 5:19-21). "Now the works of the flesh (the carnal nature) are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

While we might wonder that the Apostle, in addressing the saints, should make mention of the grosser forms of sin which could only be predicated of those who have fallen from grace, when we consider, we see that it would not have done to leave these out, because they belong to the category of evils which are opposed to the spirit of God, and can have no place in his Kingdom. Then, again, they are the abominable ends to which the lesser evils inevitably tend, as the nature of sin is always progressive. The Apostle gives fair warning that those who do such things, no matter how loud may be their professions, have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God; and therefore they have no right to the fellowship of the saints upon whom, and the cause of Christ in general, they bring only disgrace.

But the effect of the rule of the spirit, in all those who are truly new creatures, begotten of God and led of his spirit, is very differently described by the Apostle. He says, "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and desires." If we are living according to the rule of the new nature, following the leading of the spirit of God, then we must have these fruits in some measure, even from the very start of our Christian experience; and if we are following on to know the Lord and to walk in the spirit, these fruits are surely growing and becoming more and more manifest to all with whom we are associated.

If those who are in Christ would observe this principle, and deal with each other as new creatures, much discord would be avoided; for the motives and endeavors of the "new creatures" would be considered, and not the frailties or mistakes of the "earthen vessel." **Let us follow** the things that make for peace."—Rom. 14:19; 1 Thes. 5:13; Z. '95: 167, 168.

Why There is Diversity Amongst God's People

"Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"—1 Cor. 4: 7.

WHILE it is true that all men are born with inalienable rights and privileges, yet no man is born without sin. The Scriptures very properly declare that the race in Adam was sold under Sin six thousand years ago. In this sense, therefore, we were not born free, but slaves of Sin. Neither are we born equal. No two persons are exactly alike in opportunity, talent and ability. We differ from one another. God did not create some better and some worse—some more richly endowed and some less richly endowed. We are to take the Bible statement of the origin of humanity, and understand that God made Adam perfect. All the imperfections which encumber the human race are the results of the dying process. Sin has made us all to differ, then, from the original image and likeness of God. Satan brought about this difference through Mother Eve.

In our text, however, the Apostle Paul has in mind a New Creation in Jesus Christ—a new order—amongst whose members there is a difference. Some in the Church have many talents, others, few talents; some have special talents, others have ordinary talents. But Satan is not charged with having given the greater or lesser talents to these. The Apostle says that it is God who has set the various members in the Body as it has pleased Him; and that both this setting, or apportioning, of the different members of the Body and the bringing forth of the different degrees of fruitage are manifestations of God's grace in our hearts. Thus we are made to differ from each other.

Cause of Diversity of Attainments

The matter of growth in the Holy Spirit is one that is dependent in large measure upon each one's zeal to know, to do, the will of God. We are put into the School of Christ to learn of Him. Some learn more rapidly, others less rapidly. In proportion as they learn, they have greater opportunities and blessings. All are granted a measure of the Holy Spirit—all granted some blessing. Those who are anxious to know the will of the Lord and to study it grow the more rapidly, and thus have more of the Holy Spirit. These are zealous to do the Lord's will. Their progress is not attributable wholly to themselves, but especially to the favor of God.

The Apostle goes on to say, Ye are God's workmanship; "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We could not do this work ourselves. The power that is working in us is of God. He is preparing a glorious Temple. He has provided who shall be the chief corner-stone of this Temple, and who shall be the members of the Temple class. We could not choose the place for ourselves. But in God's providence we each responded to the call to be a living stone. The stones were first cut out of the dark quarry, and now they are being shaped and prepared for places in the glorious building.

Diversity of Another Kind

The great Master-Workman is doing a work upon us. He is chiseling and fashioning us. He is making us what we are. Consequently there is to be no boasting. There is a certain amount of personality connected with each one, however, and if there is too much cross-grain in the stone it will be abandoned. As the Apostle Peter exhorts, we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time. The same Apostle also reminds us that we should look up to God and give Him praise for all that we have and are.—1 Pet. 5:6; 4:11.

We are colaborers with God. We give God the praise that He has made us to differ from our former selves, that He is making us thus to differ more every day, and that He will continue the good work as the days go by and as we seek to do His will. What have we of ourselves? **Nothing!** We were wholly dead through Father Adam's disobedience; we were born in this condition, having no right to everlasting life. But God has a Plan which is world-wide in its scheme of blessing. He has proffered the blessings of the highest feature of this Plan to us, and invited us to come to Him in advance of the world. And this we receive through His grace.—Z. '13:231.

Our Sufficiency is of God—In Christ Jesus

Christ Our Wisdom

"Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness [justification], and sanctification, and redemption [deliverance]: he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
—1 Cor. 1:30.

"WISDOM is the principal thing:" "With all thy getting get understanding," thus wrote the wise man, Solomon, and so we all agree: wisdom is necessary at the very beginning of any matter that would result favorably. Wisdom is craved by the whole world of mankind, and the majority, even while going in divers directions, would claim to be seeking to walk in wisdom's ways. How important, then, that we discriminate as between the true wisdom and that which is so frequently misnamed wisdom, which is really folly!

Mother Eve in her perfection had a craving for wisdom, but inadvertently took the wrong advice and the wrong course in seeking its way. It would appear that the very basis of her temptation, through which she fell from divine favor and into sin, was the exercise of this laudable ambition to be wise. She perceived that the serpent was the most cunning, most wise, amongst the beasts, and she perceived that the serpent ate the fruit of a particular tree which Adam and herself had been forbidden to eat of. She gave credit to the tree and its forbidden fruit for the wisdom of the serpent, and concluded that its fruit was "to be desired to make one wise." The desire for the wisdom led to the disobedience—to the fall from divine favor, under the penalty of sin—death, and its associated troubles and miseries.

Many of Eve's children are seeking wisdom in a similarly wrong direction. Her proper and wise course would have been to have acknowledged that she knew comparatively little, was seriously lacking of wisdom, and that God, the very embodiment of wisdom, was also the embodiment of love and her truest friend, and that his command was the command of wisdom. Had she followed the divine command, trusted the divine wisdom, she would have been saved from her great mistake and its terrible consequences. She needed to learn that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and obedience to him the completeness of wisdom. Had she been obedient to the Lord, no doubt in due time and in a much better way he would have granted her all the wisdom she desired and was capable of using. The same principles hold true with Eve's children: all who would walk in wisdom's paths should learn that all true wisdom "comes from above" and that any other is "earthly, sensual, devilish."

One of the first lessons of life to be learned is, that our own judgments are unsafe, and even those who are least unbalanced by the fall and who, therefore, more closely resemble mother Eve who was perfect, are as liable as she was to make the mistake of seeking wisdom in a wrong direction—leaning to their own understanding. (Prov. 3:5.) Those, therefore, who would take the wisest course should promptly admit their own unwisdom and seek for divine direction, divine wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not."—Jas. 1:5.

But alas, how few are disposed to accept the wisdom that cometh from above! The majority have so large a degree of selfishness that they seem indeed to make miserable failures out of the best opportunities of their lives, before they realize that they lack wisdom and need guidance by the great Teacher. Hence, as the Lord declares, only the humble, only the "poor in spirit," are in the way that leads to eternal life and the Kingdom—because only these will seek for and obey the heavenly wisdom from the great Counselor. This class alone is in the condition to be taught of God: and concerning all who shall attain to the fulness of divine favor it is written, "They shall all be taught of God."

It is for this reason that, as we look about us in the world, we find just the condition of things which the Apostle described in the verses preceding our text, namely, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the [worldly] wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen." Do we not see that as a rule the men and women of largest natural ability, and greatest natural wisdom, fail to obtain the riches of divine grace in knowledge and in experience, which some of the less favored naturally do attain? Surely, the reason of this generally is that the greater our mental poverty, the greater our humility, and consequently the greater our trust in the Lord's wisdom, and reliance upon his instruction, and obedience thereto.

Not always is this true, of course; for we find that some of the most haughty and self-conceited of our race are really the most poverty stricken as respects real ability: and occasionally we find some possessed of rare abilities, who are extremely humble minded and very reliant upon God; but neither of these cases is the rule: they are exceptions to the rule. Gather together a company of God's devoted, consecrated people in any place and scan them critically, and you will be convinced that not many wise, or great, or mighty are being chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith to be heirs of the Kingdom. The worldly-wise today are not to be found among the open scoffers and infidels, for worldly wisdom dictates to them a different course; they are to be found rather in the most respectable and aristocratic congregations of professed Christians. Many of them are too honorable to be open hypocrites, and therefore rarely take part in meetings or say anything respecting their inmost convictions,—their inmost thoughts or doubts respecting the creed of their own church and the creeds of all other churches; nevertheless they feel that it is wise to support Christianity, because of its moral influence on their families, their employees and their neighbors; besides even the doctrines which they at heart repudiate have, they believe, a restraining influence upon the "lower classes:" hence their wisdom, worldly-wisdom, guides them into the support of Christianity, but forbids them to go to any extreme, such as annunciation of faith in Christ or full consecration to his service.

For the humble, however, God has provided true wisdom in Christ. His words no less than his example show us that we are sinners and that "no man cometh unto the Father" except by him. He tells us of the Father's pity, and of the redemption provided through his own blood, and of our privilege to accept of divine grace unto full forgiveness and reconciliation, and of our need of the heavenly wisdom for every step of the journey, if we would walk the narrow way, which leads to the glory of the Kingdom and life everlasting. And all who accept this "call" accept the great Advocate's instruction and guidance, as the very essence of divine wisdom. With varying degrees of promptness and after varying degrees of wandering from this good Shepherd, and being sought and found by him, the faithful eventually reach the position where they put no confidence in themselves and their own wisdom, but all confidence in the wisdom of him whom God hath appointed to be our wisdom—"who of God is made unto us wisdom." When this degree of progress has been attained, a measure of rest and contentment takes possession of the true sheep, which permits them to look up to God with confidence in every matter and at every time—especially in seasons of distress and grief and trial. They learn not to trust to their own wisdom any longer; but to trust implicitly to the wisdom and goodness of the great Shepherd.

But not for a considerable time is such a development of confidence in the Lord's wisdom attained: meantime, they have many battles and contentions against the wiles of Satan, who would tempt them to use their own wisdom or the wisdom of other men and to doubt the results of following the divine wisdom and its program. On every hand, the flesh, assisted by the devil, offers inducements and seductions to follow its way and to cease to follow in the Lord's way. In business affairs, in church affairs, in home and family affairs, the temptation is continually advanced, that we should choose our own way, follow our own preferences and thereby reap larger and better results. It is only after considerable experience, and frequently after many failures, that the "pilgrim" for the heavenly country learns to trust no wisdom but that which cometh down from above and is in accordance with the divine Word. Describing the attitude of the true children of God, abiding in Christ as branches in the vine, the Apostle says:—

"He hath abounded toward us in all **wisdom** and prudence: having made known unto us the mysteries of his will."—Eph. 1:8.

"We also pray for you and desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."—Col. 1:9, 10.

Let your hearts be "knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."—Col. 2:2, 3.

Notwithstanding the fact that those who accept Christ are the "meek," "the poor in spirit," and lower than the average standard along the lines of worldly wisdom and power and wealth, yet nevertheless, the acceptance by these of **Christ as their wisdom** makes them really wiser than others;—not only in respect to the greater riches which they are laying up in heaven, but also wiser in respect to the most ordinary affairs of this present life. This is not because they miraculously receive new brains or a better and more orderly arrangement of the brains they have, but because submitting their judgments on every subject to the will of the Lord, and walking according to his directions in every matter and in every particular, they have **his wisdom, his spirit,** to guide them. Hence, although their own minds are imperfect and unbalanced, as much or more than the average of the race, the Apostle is able to say of such, "God hath given us the spirit of a sound mind."—2 Tim. 1:7.

The spirit of a sound mind enables its possessors to view things more correctly than they would be able to view them of themselves: for instance, it cautions us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but according to the measure of the Lord's spirit possessed. Yet while cautioning us to be very humble, it guards us against being fearful, men-pleasers, sycophants. While constraining us to be peace-lovers and peace-makers, and kind, and forgiving, and generous, without maliciousness or vindictiveness, it nevertheless cautions us to be firm respecting principles of righteousness and truth. We may and should gladly yield our own preferences to those of others, for the sake of serving others or doing them good, yet we must never do so at the expense of the truth and principle. In the family, love is to be the rule, blended with mercy and justice, kindness and generosity; nevertheless, the rod is not to be spared if its use be necessary to the proper training of the child. And the Christian father is not only to be "kind and gentle toward all," but is to "rule his own family well, having his own children in proper subjection." Thus, we might multiply the various counsels of the heavenly wisdom, as it enters into the lives of those who are fully devoted to the Lord and gives them wisdom and grace for the affairs of life far beyond any that they would have had without it.

After exhorting us that "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God," the Apostle James (1:5) says, "Who among you is a wise man and endued with knowledge? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have strife in your hearts, glory not [to think yourselves led of the Lord and guided by his true wisdom], and lie not against the truth. This wisdom [which in selfishness seeks its own gratification and advancement, envying others and striving selfishly for its own advancement] descendeth not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work: but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make for peace."—James 3:13-18.

Let us remember well this analysis of the wisdom that comes from above.

First, It is **pure,** guileless, sincere, honorable, open, above board: it cometh to the light, loveth the light, it is not of the darkness, nor of sin, it is utterly opposed to secret whisperings, back bitings and all slanderous and underhanded works and ways. It takes the Lord at his word, receiving the pure word of wisdom into a good and honest heart. It is honest: it does not deceive itself into believing that self-will is the Lord's will.

Secondly, It is peaceable: that is to say, so far as is possible and consistent with honesty and purity it is peaceable. It loves and desires peace, harmony, unity; but since peace is not first, but purity first, therefore it can only be fully at peace and fully in harmony with that which is pure and honest and good.

Thirdly, It is gentle—it is not rude, coarse, rough, and has no sympathy with such a spirit and such methods. It is not only of God, but God like. Nevertheless, its gentleness follows its purity and peaceableness: those who receive this wisdom are not first or primarily gentle, and therefore peaceable and pure, but they are primarily pure, sanctified with the truth, and therefore are peaceable, and therefore are gentle, and therefore are easy to be entreated. But they can only be easily entreated in harmony with purity, peace and gentleness: they cannot be easily entreated to assist in any evil work of bearing false witness or scandal-mongers, or slandering, or evil-speaking, nor into any of the works of the flesh and the devil.

Fourthly, It is full of mercy and good fruits: it rejoices in mercy, because that is a part of its very self: mercy and all the good fruits of the spirit of the Lord are sure to proceed from the heart in which rules the spirit of love, honesty, purity, peaceableness and gentleness. But this mercy, while taking hold upon the ignorant and the unintentional evil-doers with sympathy and help, cannot have the slightest sympathy or affiliation with wilful wrong-doers, because the spirit of wisdom is not first mercy, but first purity; hence, the mercy of the spirit of wisdom can only exercise itself upon the unintentional wrong-doers, or the ignorant wrong-doers.

Fifth, Without partiality (which would signify injustice): the purity and peace, gentleness, mercy and good fruits of the spirit of wisdom, lead us to be no respecters of persons, except as character shall demonstrate real value: the outward features, the natural man, the color of his skin, etc., are ignored by the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom that cometh from above. It is impartial and loves that which is pure, good, peaceable, gentle, true, wherever found and under whatever circumstances it exhibits itself.

Sixth. It is without hypocrisy. This heavenly wisdom is so pure, so peaceable, so gentle and so merciful, toward all that are worthy of consideration or notice, that there is no necessity for hypocrisy where it controls. And it is bound to be out of harmony, out of sympathy and out of fellowship with all that is sinful; and in fellowship and in sympathy with all that is pure or that is making for purity and peace and gentleness—so that it has no room for hypocrisy.

Let us, dearly beloved, as children of God, more and more fully accept Christ as our wisdom, for all of the affairs of life—little as well as great, temporal as well as spiritual. Let us seek to be more and more **filled** with the spirit of true wisdom that cometh from above, whose ultimate teaching is **holiness** to the Lord.—Z. '98: 51-54.

A Practical Question

A READER writes that she recently met some of like precious faith, who, while recognizing Sanctification as she does, did not seem to have an ecstatic joy, accompanied by great emotion, but, on the contrary, seemed to hold the doctrine of full consecration by a process of mental reasoning. She was disappointed in finding them, as she thought, too cold and calculating. She found, too, that they did not hold to an **instantaneous** change of character;—from sin to perfection in holiness, at one bound. She desires our expression on the subject.

We are glad of the opportunity thus afforded us of giving a word of caution on both sides of this question. It is a mistake with some, to cultivate and appreciate only the intellectual side of God's grace, while others appreciate and cultivate chiefly the emotions aroused by God's grace and truth. And while we should realize that these extremes result often from a difference of temperaments, this should be no reason for neglecting to alter or modify our natural tendencies, to have them conform to the Lord's pleasure, as indicated to us in his Word.

Our Lord's prayer for his people clearly indicates what is the proper means for our sanctification. He prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth;" and then, making us doubly sure of his meaning, he added, "thy Word is truth." Those, therefore, who attempt to be sanctified by feelings or by errors or in any other way than by the truth are seeking a good thing in a wrong way; and results will surely be unsatisfactory until the Lord's method is adopted.

But that is no less serious a mistake which some others make, who, while devouring God's Word, get from it merely relief from fears and a satisfaction for their curiosity. Curiosity is insatiable; and if they fail to get what God designed to give them through the truth (Sanctification), they will ere long be devouring one error after another to feed their curiosity, and will delude themselves into supposing that they are continually feeding upon truth;—although they are well aware that each new thing devoured is soon abandoned as error, while their curiosity continues the devouring process, but never is satisfied. These the Apostle describes as "ever learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."—2 Tim. 3:7.

The proper course unites the head with the heart in the search for truth. The heart searches that it may know or prove what is that good and acceptable will of God, that it may please and serve him. The head, as the servant of the heart, searches to test or **prove** the truth, that the honest heart be not deceived into believing and serving amiss. But when the head undertakes to do all the truth-seeking and feeding, the real design of the truth—sanctification—is not attained. The result is merely a reasoning **about** the truth, and not a practicing of the truth:—the word of truth is handled and dissected, but the spirit of it is not received into good and honest hearts; because it is not a heart-hunger that is being fed, but a curiosity-hunger.

But where the heart hungers and thirsts after righteousness (after right views of God and of fellowmen and of the proper use of our time and influence and talents), and the head, as the **heart's servant,** engages in searching God's Word, the case is different; because then each morsel of truth received is at once applied in the life, and the sanctifying work begins and progresses. To this true heart to know the Lord's will means to at once strive to do what is seen; and **not merely to see the duty or privilege.**

Where truth is seen, and when the heart falls in love with it so that it delights to conform itself to it, even at the cost of convenience or friendships, or other selfish advantages,—there the sanctifying influence or spirit of the truth is at work;—there the results sought and intended by our Lord are being attained. Joy will accompany, and peace and trust and love. And **zeal** will never be lacking in a thoroughly sanctified heart, although all may not manifest it in the same way. With one it may be manifested boisterously and with great activity, as a mountain stream when suddenly swollen by a cloud burst; with another it may be that deep and unshown current of spiritual life which enables its possessor to go more calmly forward in a life of sacrifice and faithfulness to duty, against all opposition;—as an iceberg, moved by the under current of the ocean, moves steadily and irresistibly with that current, against all the surface currents of the ocean.

To enter into the spirit of the Lord's plan, as revealed in his Word, is to be sanctified by it: and this is impossible without some knowledge of it. And whoever catches the spirit of the truth will have some **emotions**, whether or not they are manifest to others. Sanctification is the truth acted upon—put into the affairs of life: and, under present-age conditions, always leads to self-denials, self-sacrificings in the service of God, and Truth, and fellow-men. —Z. '93:153, 154.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Whatever may be the Lord's portion of experience for us, his grace is sufficient, and he is able to make an ignominious death a joyful one to those who put their trust in him.—Z. '11:5.

◆

The anointing which our Lord and the members of His mystical Body have received is different from anything else in the whole world. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is variously spoken of as the spirit of holiness, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of the Truth, and the spirit of God. It is not the Truth, but the **spirit** of the Truth, it is not the Word of God, although it is in harmony with the Word; it is not holiness, yet it is in full accord with holiness. It is the spirit, the disposition, which is associated with a sound mind, with holiness, with Truth and with the Word of God.—Z. '13:131.

◆

"BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS"

There is a lesson for the Lord's people here, a lesson of peace: Blessed are those who are peaceable and who are peacemakers—blessed of God. They may not always prosper as well in outward and temporal matters, but they surely will be prosperous in their hearts, in their heart experiences, in their relationship to the Lord; they surely will make the better progress in the fruits and graces of the Spirit, and be the better fitted and prepared for the glorious opportunities soon to come, when, as the antitypical Isaac, associated as members of the Prince of Peace, they shall engage in the work of uplifting and refreshing and blessing all mankind. True, there are times when "backbone" is necessary, when principle is involved, and when retreat would be absolutely wrong; but these cases are rare. Undoubtedly we can often yield, and, as Isaac did, in so doing may find a provision of the Lord for our prosperity. Had the requirement of Abimelech been that Isaac should renounce the worship of the true God we can readily see that the principle involved would have hindered Isaac from yielding; and so with us, we are to note carefully and stand by everything involving principle.—Z. '07:74.

◆

The Lord does not wish his people to be guided in any sense as a horse with a bit, or as a ship with a rudder. But he appeals to their minds and judgment, not only through the Scriptures, but also through their experiences in life—through his providences. We learn certain lessons respecting God from our daily living, or we **ought** to do so. If we have proved that certain courses of conduct are injurious, we should profit by these experiences. If we have made a mistake, we should profit by the mistake. If we have had some blessing, we should profit by that. We should not be swayed by what some one desires us to do, but we should "count the cost," as Jesus says. We should be guided by reason, seeking to read the will of God through the providences of life, its experiences, and through the Word of God. To our understanding, therefore, the Apostle meant by this statement, ("Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—1 Thess. 5:21) that God's people should be reasonable, rational people, and should use their very best judgment as to what they accept or reject.—Z. '11:28.

◆

It is better that the trials, the difficulties, the sharp stones and thorns of the narrow way we tread are seen alone by our gracious Care-taker who has promised His faithful that all things shall be so overruled as to outwork for their highest welfare. "My times are in Thy hand; my God, I wish them there."—Z. '11:454.

◆

GOD'S PERFECT PEACE

"Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its glad increase.
Perfect; yet it floweth **fuller** every day;
Perfect; yet it groweth **deeper** all the way.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as he promised, perfect peace and rest.

"Hidden in the hollow of his blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry toucheth spirit there.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as he promised, perfect peace and rest.

"Every joy or trial cometh from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love.
We may trust him solely, all for us to do;
They who trust him wholly, find him wholly true.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as he promised, perfect peace and rest."
—Z. '11:44.

◆

"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"

There is a difference between the injunction to love as brethren and to lay down our lives for the brethren. Whatever we may do for any member of the body of Christ, for any consecrated believer, the Lord tells us he will esteem as though it were done unto him. Hence as it would be our duty and our privilege and our joy to lay down our lives in the service of the Lord, we must attain to such a love for the brethren, because they are his, that we will delight to lay down our lives for them as a means of demonstrating to the Lord our loyalty to him and his cause. This does not necessarily mean the laying down of physical strength and health and life in the physical services and ministries to the brethren, though these may be and are in many instances very profitable. It is not according to the flesh that the Lord's followers are brethren but according to the spirit, and hence the injunction to lay down our lives for the brethren would more particularly signify the laying down of our physicial health and strength, knowledge, talents and means in the service of the spiritual interests of the Lord's people.—Z. '07:36.

◆

RESIGNATION

Source of my life's refreshing springs,
Whose presence in my heart sustains me,
Thy love appoints me pleasant things,
Thy mercy orders all that pains me.

If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
They might be glad, but not in Thee.

Well may Thine own beloved, who see,
In all their lot their Father's pleasure,
Bear loss of all they love, save Thee,
Their living, everlasting treasure.

Well may thy happy children cease
From restless wishes prone to sin,
And, in Thine own exceeding peace,
Yield to Thy daily discipline.

We need as much the cross we bear
As air we breathe—as light we see:
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
It binds us to our strength in Thee.
—Z. '92:230.

◆

Pilate was afraid when he heard that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and again sought an interview with him: but Jesus' answer was, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above" permitted of the Father. Pilate could do no more; even Jesus himself assented, and claimed that it was in the divine order that he should die. Pilate signed the death sentence.—John 19:4-11.

There is a lesson for us in these words of our Lord, respecting the **Father's permission** of all that happened to him. We who are members of his body are counted in with him as under divine supervision, so that in all of our affairs all things are guaranteed to work together for our good while walking in his footsteps. This is the ground of our confidence in all the various trying circumstances of life. This it is that gives the peace of God which passeth all understanding, ruling in our hearts, not only subduing self and enabling us to submit ourselves to the will of God, but permitting us even to rejoice in tribulation, **knowing** that under divine providence, and that rightly received, it will work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. —2 Cor. 4:17; Z. '01:104, 105.

◆

The Scriptures assure us that our Lord was tempted in all points like as we (his brethren) are, and we see in this his experience in Gethsemane an illustration of one of the most severe trials which come to the Lord's people. It would seem as though the Adversary at times attempted to discourage us by making us think that the trials and difficulties of the "narrow Way" of sacrifice will be all unavailing anyhow, and that we might as well give up. When such thoughts come to those who are earnestly and faithfully seeking to fulfil the conditions of their consecration vows they constitute one of the severest trials that could overtake them; if they have given up this world and its affections, hopes, aims, desires, exchanging all these for the heavenly, then anything which seems to becloud the heavenly hopes, leaves them in a darkness more utter, more dense, than they could have known had they never seen and appreciated the glorious promises. And what course should we pursue at such a time? We should follow the example of our Lord, and seek the Father's face, anxious to know whether or not everything is all right with him; anxious for some assurances that while the world may hate us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely, we still have his approval; anxious for some fresh assurance that it will be well with us, that the Lord will grant us a part in the better resurrection to life eternal.—Z. '01:79.

◆

When we think of the fact that a membership in this "royal priesthood" implies a full, living **self-sacrifice** to the Lord and his cause, and the attainment, while sacrificing, of the fruits of the spirit—meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly kindness.—Love, we rather wonder that so many as 144,000 could be found in the past nearly nineteen centuries. And it is of those who cultivate these graces, and attain them in their **hearts** (even if they always cannot exercise them as fully as they could desire in their **flesh**) that the Apostle declares: "If ye do **these things** ye shall never fall, but so (doing) an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:5-11; Z. '01:94.

◆

O, how we rejoice in (our Lord's) faithfulness unto death—even the death of the cross! How we praise him that he did not exercise his power, and "call for more than twelve legions of angels" to deliver him, but on the contrary sacrificed himself, laying down his own life as a ransom for Adam and his race!—Z. '01:106.

◆

Occasionally things occur in respect to the Lord's Word and what he permits his people to suffer, and the power he permits their adversaries to exercise, which are incomprehensible, and his followers may at such times be obliged simply to hold their peace; but those who know the Lord through intimate communion and fellowship of heart, who have fed upon "the deep things of God," who have drunk of his spirit—although unable to explain the difficulties, are fully able to trust in him and to hope and to wait for such expressions as are sure to come, in vindication of his every act and word and providence, in due time.—Z. '01:106.

◆

God's promise is the foundation upon which all that we hope for, either of character or coming glory, is built. Let us prize this truth so that we will not compromise it in any sense or in any degree; let us not only hold the truth in the letter but in the spirit:—in the love of it, because it is true, as well as because it is beautiful and grand. Holding it thus we will be careful that no one shall twist it for us or pervert it, and equally careful that we do not handle the word of God deceitfully ourselves, to the blinding of our own eyes of understanding, and thus to our own hindrance.—Z. '01: 119.

Some one has suggested that possibly Dorcas was a martyr—that her death probably resulted from her service to others. A Christian poet has said of such as she: —

"These, though their names appear not on the scroll
Of martyrologists, laid down their lives,
No less a martyrdom in Jesus' eyes—
For his dear brethren's sake:—watching the couch
Of loathsome sickness or of slow decay,
Or visiting the captive in his cell,
Or struggling with a burden not their own,
Until their weary life sinks slow away,
These, too, are martyrs, brother."

Yes, all of the Lord's saints are to be martyrs:—their consecration is to lay down their lives in the service of the Lord, the brethren and the truth; and as nearly as they can understand in the way which he shall direct them, through his Word and his providences. Our covenant is not one of self-preservation, but one of self-sacrifice. True, we are looking for and hoping for a life eternal and glorious as spirit beings; but the terms and conditions upon which we are scripturally hoping to attain that perfect and new life are that we shall sacrifice what remains of this present earthly life.—Z. '02:105, 106.

"A little talk with Jesus, how it cheers our lonely way!" writes the poet, and who that is a Christian has failed of this experience? And fortunate are those who early learn, that while we should greatly appreciate our privilege of talking with the Lord in prayer, we are to recognize that it is not this that brings the full blessing; but our attentive hearing, understanding and appreciating what he says to us: —the Word of Truth. Our hearts burn while he talks and we listen, more than when we talk even to him.—Z. '01:134.

We can well afford to sacrifice earthly interests, since the promises to which we are heirs belong to the future, and are so exceedingly abundant, more than we could ask or think, that their attainment will far more than compensate for any incidental losses or deprivations as respects the present time. —Z. '01: 263.

Says the Apostle, Ye are "a holy nation." In what sense can this people be called a nation? A nation is a body of people united under one government and having common interests and bound by mutual obligations and mutual consent, either expressed or implied, to conserve those interests. Truly such a people, such a nation, are we under Christ Jesus our King, and our interests are indeed one, they are the interests of the truth concerning the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in all the earth. Our national policy is aggressive, and contemplates the complete subjection of every other power; but its object, unlike that of all other ambitious powers, is not the glorification of selfishness, but the exaltation of meekness and righteousness and the establishment of universal peace and happiness. Every loyal citizen of this nation is deeply interested in its politics, and is ready to take up the sword for its defense at any moment. However, we remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. Our sword is "the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God," and an everyday exercise and drill in its use makes us able soldiers.

Let all the members of this "chosen generation," this "royal priesthood," this "holy nation," this "peculiar people," seek more and more—by vigilance, by faithfulness and by holiness—to separate themselves from the spirit of the world, to submit themselves to the transforming influences of the spirit of God, and to discipline and drill themselves in the use of the sword of the spirit.—Z. '93: 250.

Seeing that all the efforts of men to hide themselves "from the wrath of the Lamb" when the great day of his wrath shall have come will be in vain, the saints would best make no such effort to hide their children, knowing that it would be folly. The trouble comes to overthrow sin and every false system and thing; and the lessons it brings will prove beneficial to mankind in general, breaking their idols and purging their hearts. If our children and friends need the purging, we should not wish to have them escape it. If they do not need it, we may rest assured that the Lord will permit the glorified members of his body, his Church, to care for their children and friends during that trouble and to succor them from all that would not be to their benefit. What more could we ask than that we should be their ministering guardians, far more able to help them than if with them in the flesh? The best provision which parents can make for their children is to give them, by precept and example, faithful instruction in righteousness.—Z. '96: 82.

"Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile,
Weary, I know it, of the press and throng;
Wipe from your brow the sweat and dust of toil,
And in My quiet strength again be strong.

"Come, tell Me all that ye have said and done,
Your victories and failures, hopes and fears;
I know how hardly souls are wooed and won;
My choicest wreaths are always wet with tears.

"Come ye aside from all the world holds dear,
For converse which the world has never known—
Alone with Me and with My Father here,
With Me and with My Father not alone.

"Then fresh from converse with your Lord return,
And work till daylight softens into even;
The brief hours are not lost in which we learn
More of our Master and His rest in heaven."
—Z. '11: 376, 377.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY

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Our Anchor Sure and Steadfast

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: for He is faithful that promised."—Hebrews 10:23.

If WE were to let go this hope, this anchor to our souls, we should be adrift upon a shoreless sea, whose mighty billows would sweep us down to eternal death. A great Time of Trouble is now about to break upon the whole world, and any of the Lord's people whose faith and hope are not firmly anchored to the Rock of Ages, any who are fearful to trust His promises, will be overwhelmed in the storm. Shall this be our experience?

"The Time of Trouble nears, 'it hasteth greatly,'
E'en now its ripples span the world-wide sea:
Oh, when its waves are swoll'n to mountains stately,
Will the resistless billows sweep o'er me?"

Some of the Lord's real children will have their part in this great trouble-time; yet none who are faithful, who are obedient, will suffer thus. These will be kept in perfect safety to the end of their course, and will, we believe, be gathered "within the veil" before the great storm breaks in its fury. Because of our faith in the Master, because of our strong confidence in Him, our knowledge that He has been an overcomer, and that the Father has rewarded Him and that He is now our Advocate, our great High Priest, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," therefore our hearts have good courage. We know that He will shortly "stand up" in power and great authority to establish His Kingdom and to exalt all His faithful to reign with Him in that Kingdom; therefore our hope is firm; it is indeed an anchor to our souls. We are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."—Ephesians 6:10.

We shall never lose our courage if we keep our eyes continually fixed on Him, and our hand closely clasped in His. God's eternal promises are the foundation upon which all that we hope, either of character, or of coming glory, is built. And what a strong foundation! Let us be faithful to Him who hath called us. Let us hold the glorious Truth not only in the letter, but also in the spirit. Let us hold it in the love of it, because it is the Truth, as well as because of its matchless beauty and grandeur.

Let us ever remember the importance of patient endurance, constancy, that we may develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit, that we may take joyfully every trial, every persecution, every difficulty, which our God in His infinite Wisdom and Love may permit to come upon us for our testing and the ripening of that character which is of paramount importance, and without which we can never hope to see our Father's face, nor partake of the glory to which we have been called with Christ. Let us indeed "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful who hath promised." Let us "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." Yea, "we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope" unto death.—Hebrews 3:6; 10:23; 6:11.

"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfurl their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?"

Surely by the grace of God our anchor will hold; for

"We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love!"
—Z. '14:212.

CONVENTIONS

All Standfast Bible Students are heartily invited to attend the next General Convention, which will be held at Bellingham, Wash., on July 2nd, 3rd and 4th, at the New Moose Hall, 1323 Railroad Avenue. Two meals will be provided daily for all conventioners, by the local Ecclesia. Reception Committee will meet all boats and trains. For further information, please write to Bro. Leon K. Pattison, 1225 High Street, Bellingham, Wash. Bros. Heard and Palmer are expected to serve at this Convention.

Further Conventions have also been arranged, at which Bros. Heard and Zinck will serve, as follows:

Convention at Spokane, Wash., July 12th and 13th.

Convention at Minneapolis, Minn., July 17th and 18th.

Convention at Withee, Wis., July 21st and 22nd.
Convention at Richfield, Wis., July 24th and 25th.
Convention at Chicago, Ill., July 28th and 29th.

From Chicago Bro. Zinck will return to Minneapolis and visit the different classes in the East, continuing his route to Dallas, Texas; Riverside, California; and Grant's Pass, Oregon.

Bro. Heard will continue from Chicago to: Springfield, Ill., July 31st; Kansas City, Mo., August 2nd; and Convention at Yakima, Wash, August 6th and 7th.

"When he shall appear in glory, we also shall appear with him," explains the Apostle (Col. 3:4), and this view agrees with the Apostle's other statement that, as the wife is the glory of the husband, so the Church is the glory of Christ, consequently, our Lord could not appear in his glory according to his own arrangement as expressed through his own mouthpieces, until first he had associated the Bride with himself.—Z. '98:141.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

"She Hath Done What She Could"

Matt. 26: 6-13.

Golden Text:—"She hath wrought a good work upon me."

THIS STUDY takes us back . . . . to the Saturday night preceding our Lord's death—the close of the Jewish Sabbath day. In harmony with the prevailing custom, Jesus and his disciples and others were invited to a feast that evening. They had just arrived the previous evening from Jericho as intent upon keeping the feast of Passover at Jerusalem—the feast of which our Lord Jesus said, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15.) Although Jesus had been telling the apostles that he was going to Jerusalem and would there be crucified, they seemed not to realize the matter, probably because he had spoken so many things to them in dark sayings, as, for instance, when he told them that he was the bread that came down from heaven, etc., and that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. Perhaps the crucifixion suggested was also hyperbolical language; at least they could not realize that it would be so, even though Peter had been reproved for his disbelief in the matter.

The feast was in the house of Simon the leper. Simon was a common name in those parts at that time, and this Simon was distinguished by the fact that he had been a leper—quite possibly he had been healed by the Lord, and this may have been the beginning of the intimate acquaintance between Jesus and the family of which Lazarus, Martha and Mary were prominent members. One of the Evangelists tells us that Lazarus was one of those who sat at the feast, that Martha was one of those who served, and the lesson before us tells especially of the work of Mary, who, while the Lord was reclining, approached and broke the seal of an alabaster box of precious perfume (not ointment, in the present use of the word). One of the accounts says that it was very precious, another that it was worth 300 pence, which in our money would be about $50.

Such anointings were very rare, usually for kings or princes or nobles; and the disciples, under the lead of Judas, who seems to have been the spokesman (see John's account), were all filled with indignation at the waste. John tells us that Judas was a thief, who carried the bag, the treasurer of the company, and that his solicitous remarks respecting the use of the money for the poor were hypocritical. In any event we may sympathize with the other apostles for falling in line with his arguments, for they were all poor men, unused to such luxury and extravagance, and in this respect probably represented the majority of the Lord's people today, who likewise would consider a perfume bill of $50 a very extravagant waste of money. We are all the more interested to know how Jesus himself regarded the matter. We realize that our conceptions of matters of this kind are more or less biased by our own selfishness or poverty and necessity for economy.

"Why Trouble Ye the Woman?"

Our Lord discerned at once the criticising, fault-finding spirit amongst his disciples and promptly took the part of Mary, saying, "Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me." Woman's intuition had guided Mary in the doing of the proper thing at the proper time. She realized that she owed the Master a debt that she never could pay, and that this costly offering of the perfume would be but a small tribute, a small expression of her gratitude. She had found in the Lord an object worthy of her heart devotion; she was not a woman's rights advocate; she found no fault with the Lord that he had not chosen her and Martha to be members of the company of apostles and to go abroad preaching his name and fame. Doubtless she would have gladly undertaken this work had she been so directed, but her womanly instincts did not lead her in this direction nor cause her to take offense at the Lord's showing a difference between the male and the female as respects the promulgation of his message.

Although debarred from the honorable service of a public ministry of the Truth, our Lord declared, "She hath done what she could." She did what pleased the Lord: she illustrated the noblest and truest qualities of the feminine heart, love, devotion, fidelity; she spoke by actions rather than by words, and the perfume of her acts of love and kindness and adoration of her Lord have come down through the ages, filling the entire Church of Christ with the sweet odor of the perfume she poured upon his head and subsequently upon his feet. This is in accord with what our Lord prophetically declared respecting the act, "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there also this that this woman hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."

What a sweet memorial of Mary! How we all love and reverence her true womanhood, and appreciate the fact that her intuitions in respect to this anointing of the Lord were superior to the reasonings of the twelve apostles on the subject—they were too cold and calculating, too business like. She made up for this deficiency in the warmth of her loving devotion. Undoubtedly woman has filled profitably just such a niche as this in the Church's history during all the centuries from then until now. Without her part undoubtedly the religion of Jesus would have been much more cold and business like and formal than it is; but the deep sympathy of true womanhood has helped to interpret the heart of Christ, the love of Christ, and has proven a blessing to all of the followers of the Lamb.

"The Poor Ye Have Always"

It is a miscalculation to suppose that the moments spent in communion with the Lord, in the study of his plan, and the dollars and hours spent in his service are wasted, and that thus the poor have less. On the contrary, in proportion as any one has true, loving devotion to the Lord, he will have devotion to his service and to the poor. No one can love the Lord in sincerity without being the more sympathetic and the more generous proportionately to the poor and to all within reach of his benevolence. As the Scriptures admonish us, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty"—to want—to poverty of soul as well as poverty of purse. (Prov. 11:24.) The Lord's followers are to be prudent, economical but not parsimonious, not miserly, not stingy, not hoarders of wealth. They are to cast their bread upon the waters; they are to do good and trust to the Lord for the results; they are to use freely the riches of the Lord as entrusted to them, both temporally and spiritually, and are to receive their blessing from the exercise or increment of these.

This very act on the part of the devoted Mary and our Lord's commendation of it have doubtless been helpful to the Lord's people along these very lines throughout this Gospel age. Similarly we were once inclined to consider the One-Day Conventions and the General Conventions of the Lord's people to be entirely too expensive, to represent a waste of money that might have been used otherwise; but our experience is that there is a blessing in the using of the money talent—that whoever fails to do some investing, some sacrificing in the interest of the Truth, will surely fail to get the large returns of spiritual blessing. Whoever on the contrary seeks to use his means in serving the Truth to others and in nourishing his own heart receives proportionately the greater blessing. We are even inclined to think that the Lord makes up to them in temporal matters also; but should this not be the case—should they be the poorer in temporal matters as a result of their spiritual feasting—we know that spiritual nourishment, fatness of soul, prosperity as New Creatures in Christ, is by far the most important matter with which we have to do. It is the very object of our present membership in the school of Christ, association with the fellow-members, that we may grow in this very grace as well as in knowledge and love in the Master's likeness.

Anointed For His Burial

Our Lord declared that Mary's action was a preparation for his burial. We remember that several of the honorable women of the Lord's company came to the tomb early on the first day of the week with spices and ointment, perfume, for his anointing, after the custom of the time, and because they failed to remember and recognize his prophecy of his resurrection from the dead on the third day. Their motive in thus going was undoubtedly a proper one, and yet Mary's conduct in anointing our Lord before his burial was very much more to the point, very much more appreciated by him. And so it is with us: with our dear friends, the brethren and others. It behooves us to anoint them with kindly words, loving sympathies, tender expressions, while they are still in the valley of conflict, before they have reached the end of the journey. We know not how much even the very strongest of the Lord's followers may need a word of sympathy and encouragement at times, and we do our own hearts good when we tender such sympathy.

We do not mean that fulsome flattery should be poured upon one another; but there is a wide difference between flattery and encouraging, sympathetic words; and who is there of sympathetic heart, possessing a heart filled with the love divine, that is not himself an alabaster box of perfume, which should be opened and poured upon the spiritual brotherhood and all of our earthly friends and relatives as we might come in contact with them, and in proportion as the blessing of the Lord would be appropriately theirs. Let us not forget this; let us use these opportunities which are ours day by day of scattering flowers in life's pathway for others, and perhaps as we do this the Lord will allow some one to scatter some flowers also for us. On the principle that he who watereth others shall himself be watered, he who helps others should never go hungry, he who comforts others should never lack comfort. Doubtless the Lord will see to it that in proportion as we have and exercise the proper spirit of benevolence and generosity toward others, we will have our share of rich blessings in return when most needed.

"Of the People There Were None With Him"—Able to Sympathize Fully

Very evidently at the close of his ministry our Lord was feeling more or less of disappointment that a larger number of the Jews had not received his gracious message, had not believed on him. Especially would this thought come to him as he read in the mind of Judas that he already was planning to be his betrayer. Moreover, he saw something of the same spirit of fear in the other eleven of his apostles, for he already knew who should betray him, and he knew also that the others would forsake him and flee in fear in the hour of his distress. If his message, if his love, if his Spirit communicated to these men would still leave them so weak in many respects, it argued that he had accomplished comparatively little in his ministry, and that the other five hundred brethren might not be more devoted than the twelve.

What a comfort it must have been to the Lord in the midst of these thoughts to find that there was one loving soul which did appreciate him and brought the alabaster box and anointed him before his burial. The joy, the comfort, the blessing that came to the heart of our dear Master, and that strengthened him for the experiences of coming days, was worth far more than the 300 pence. Not only was he willing that the matter should be told for a memorial of Mary, but we may safely conclude that in the everlasting future Mary will be ranked very high amongst the faithful followers of the Lord. She may not be one with the apostles upon the twelve thrones of Israel, but we may be sure that she will have some grand, some honorable place near to the one she loved and for whom she showed her devotion.

An unknown writer says, "Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words while their ears can hear them and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go. The flowers you mean to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way."

Selfishness Versus Generosity

Our lesson concludes with the account of how Judas soon afterwards went to the chief priests and bargained with them that for thirty pieces of silver he would seek an opportunity and betray Jesus into their hands. What a sharp contrast is here drawn between the love and generosity of Mary and the mean selfishness of Judas! The one was so full of love that she could not do enough for the great Teacher at whose feet she loved to sit, from whose lips she had received so many blessings, such joy of heart, and by whose power her brother had been recalled from the tomb and probably previously her father healed of a loathsome disease. We also should remember how much we owe this same Teacher, that his are the wonderful words of life which have brought unto our hearts joy, peace and blessing. By his words we ourselves have been called from the dead condition, for, as the Apostle declares, we were once dead in trespasses and sins, but now are quickened, energized, by the Spirit of the Lord, by the spirit of love.

We ourselves also had the leprosy of sin, condemnation, were children of wrath even as others, but our sins have been graciously covered by the Redeemer, the leprosy has been cleansed, and we have been made whiter than snow in the sight of our Lord through faith in the precious blood. We, too, have learned to sit at the Master's feet and to enjoy his teachings, and have been transformed thereby by the renewing of our minds. Is it not appropriate that we should feel that no offering we could bring him could in any sense or degree express the gratitude of our hearts? Can we not also find alabaster boxes of precious perfume for the Master? True, the Head has been glorified, and the members of the body, too, are now passed beyond the vail, but his "feet" are still with us, the last members of the body of Christ are here. Let us hasten to do all in our power, both temporally and spiritually, for the feet of Christ: let us do all in our power to cleanse them from earth defilement, even though it cost us tears; let us anoint them with the precious spikenard perfume. The more costly the affection and love that we bestow upon the members of the body of Christ, the very lowest and humblest of them, the better; all should be but an expression of the warmth of love which is in our hearts for Him and His. The time is passing rapidly—soon the last members will have crossed and be beyond the vail, beyond our anointing and beyond the blessed word, "She hath done what she could." Let us earn that expression from the dear lips of our Lord by faithfulness to those who now represent him in the world—to the household of faith, to the members of the body of Christ.

For Thirty Pieces of Silver

Selfishness seems to lie at the very foundation of all the mean, ignoble deeds of our fallen nature. It was selfish ambition that led mother Eve to grasp the forbidden fruit, and it is safe to say that selfishness ever since has prompted to all the mean and ignoble things of the six thousand years' reign of sin and death. The spirit of a sound mind is what we should each and all strive for. This would mean, on the one hand, that we should not be too extravagant, and, on the other hand, that we should not be too parsimonious. But if we should err on either side would it not be safest and best that we should err on the side of too great generosity rather than on the reverse? Well did the Apostle write that the love of wealth is the root of all evil. This might include not only money but wealth of honor, name, influence or power. The Apostle adds, "which some coveting after have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."—1 Tim. 6:10.

As an illustration of this class take the case of Judas in our lesson, selling his Master for thirty pieces of silver! No matter if he did reason that Jesus had said that he was about to die, and said that this perfume was associated with his burial. No matter if Judas were sure that all these things would happen to the Lord anyway, and thought that he might just as well have the thirty pieces of silver. It did not condone the offence. Selfishness and meanness had so far been encouraged in his heart that, notwithstanding his intimate association with the Master, his knowledge of his precious words and mighty acts, neither love nor reverence stood in the way of selfishness.

Judas "went to his own place," the Second Death, and that with a realization that it would have been better for him had he never been born. Whoever will allow selfish ambitions of any kind to have control in his heart, whoever will not allow the Lord's grace and truth to come into his heart and enlarge it and fill it with love, will likewise go to his own place, the Second Death. The divine provisions are only for those who will eventually be filled with love, the Spirit of God, the spirit of generosity. Let us all then more and more avoid the Judas spirit, the heart of selfishness, money love, self love and ambition, and let us more and more have the loving heart of Mary and her humility, which not only made her willing to spend her means to serve the truth, but made her willing also to humble herself even to the extent of tears and the use of woman's highest ornament, her hair, in the service of her Master, her Lord, and that upon his humblest members, the feet of him.—Z. '06:330-333.

David's Gratitude to God

2 Sam. 22:40-51.

Golden Text—"The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer."—2 Sam. 22:2.

THIS entire chapter is one of David's songs of praise and gratitude to God for his goodness and his loving providences which had been so manifest toward him ever since his anointing by Samuel the prophet, and doubtless before that as well. It calls to mind another expression of one of his psalms,—"Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) Indeed, the writings of David, and all the prophets and apostles as well, abound in fervent expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They not only praise the Lord themselves, lovingly and gratefully recounting all his mercies, but, with impassioned eloquence and holy enthusiasm, they call upon all the sons of men, and every thing that hath breath, and even inanimate nature, to laud and magnify his holy name. The worshippers are also bidden to bring with them to the concert of praise every musical instrument of human device; and grateful reverence exclaims,—"Blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen!"—Psa. 33:2, 3; 50:1-6; 72:19. See also Exod. 15:1-21.

As we thus consider that, by the voice of inspiration, the whole human race is called to praise and worship and thanksgiving, we are led to consider further the relationship which the spirit of praise has to the Christian or godly character. David says, it is "comely for the upright." But why so? It is because loving gratitude is one of the divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which should therefore be cultivated. It is this element of the intelligent creature that is designed to be responsive to the divine goodness and benevolence; and it is this element of character in man which makes fellowship and communion with God possible. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation; if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting his goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out his love; and so also nothing, of all his goodness and grace, would awaken love in us. But since for the divine pleasure we are and were created (Rev. 4:11), God endowed his intelligent creature with this element of character which, being responsive to his own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with himself, which is the chief end of human existence, both on the side of the creature and of the Creator.—Psa. 16:11; Prov. 11:20; 15:8.

Rejoicing and the spirit of praise are thus seen to be indissolubly linked together in the divine economy; and so David links them, saying, Rejoice in the Lord, for praise is comely," thus making the two almost synonymous. To see this principle illustrated take as examples the dog and the hog. Neither can have any appreciation of the divine goodness, neither being created in the mental or moral likeness of God, and hence being utterly incapable of knowing or thinking of him. Man is the highest being that they can know in any sense or degree; and that is first, because man is visible and tangible to them, and second, because they have some similar faculties, though very inferior and exercised within a much narrower sphere. The dog has in him to a considerable degree the sense of gratitude: feed and caress him, and he shows signs of gratitude and affection, and a desire to reward you with a manifestation of appreciation. He wags his tail, looks kindly into your face, licks your hand, caresses you with his head and watches to see what errand he can do for you. But the hog, on the contrary, makes no demonstration of appreciation: he takes all he can get without even so much as a look of recognition; his eyes are always downward, and his snout continually rooting in the earth for more; and a grunt is the only sound to which he gives expression. A hog, therefore, can have no pleasure in man; nor can man find any pleasure in the hog. There is no bond of fellowship whatever, and man therefore tolerates his existence only until his flesh is fit for the slaughter and the market, while between the dog and his master there is strong friendship which, when cultivated, gives pleasure to both, and they become life-long friends, irrespective of any commercial value.

It is plain, therefore, that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving appreciation of all the manifest goodness of God, is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind his acts of mercy and of grace; that in our prayers we frequently tell him how all his goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of his love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of his presence and favor more fully realized; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love him because he first loved us; and every time we see some new mark of his love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fulness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for his favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John 16:24.

We observe that in Israel the spirit of praise was cultivated by calling to mind and recounting what the Lord had done for them: "If I do not remember thee," says David, "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."—Psa. 137:6. See also Exod. 15:1-21; Deut. 7:17, 18; 8:2; 15:15; 32:7; 1 Chron. 16:12; Psa. 20:7; 63:5-7; 143:5, 6; 77:10-12.

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord, especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and deliverances from dangers and snares and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and his goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realize that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of his fulness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our prayer will be, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."—Psa. 42:1.

This same principle of gratitude and praise, which reciprocates loving kindness and generosity, is that which also makes human friendship and fellowship possible and delightful. In our intercourse one with another, if the kindnesses we show awaken no sense of appreciation, receive no acknowledgment, and their repetition is expected as a matter of course, there can, in the very nature of things, be no such thing as fellowship. True, as Christians, we may not relax kindness and generosity on this account; for we, like our heavenly Father, are to be kind to the unthankful as well as to the thankful (Matt. 5:44-48); but when this goodness awakens no appreciation, no love, fellowship becomes impossible.

In David's thanksgiving for victories over his enemies we observe that those enemies were the enemies of the Lord and his people, whom David was commissioned of God to conquer. These battles he undertook in the strength which God supplied, and the victories he properly ascribes to God, the rock of his salvation. The words, regarded from the standpoint of the future, are also prophetic of the victories of Christ, of whom David was a type, and to whom Jehovah will grant victory full and complete over all his enemies,—the enemies of God, the enemies of truth and righteousness. The whole strain of thanksgiving, thus viewed in its wider application to the conquests of Christ, is eloquent in its prophecy of his glorious victory, as well as in praise to Jehovah. (1 Cor. 15:27, 28.) The prophecy of a future wider dominion, contained in verses 44-46 can only be considered as fully applicable to the wider dominion of Christ.

The Golden Text is a blessed assurance applicable to all of the Lord's people, and it is amply verified to all those who delight themselves in the Lord, who meditate upon his goodness and render to him the praise that is due to his holy name.—"The Lord is my rock [upon which I may safely build my hopes], and my fortress [in which I may safely hide], and my deliverer [in every time of trouble]."—Z. '96:210, 211.

"The Royal Diadem"

"Thou shalt be called by a new name; . . . thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."—Isa. 62:2, 3.

IN ONE PLACE the Prophet Jeremiah declares, "This is the name whereby **He** shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." In another place he says, "**She** shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness [or, the Righteousness of Jehovah]." And so the Apostle declares, "That we might be made **the Righteousness of God** through Him."—Jer. 23:6; 33:16; 2 Cor. 5:21.

These statements refer to Zion. The typical Zion is the Jewish nation; and the antitypical Zion is the glorified Christ. Very properly, then, we may understand that the blessings which belong to the Church on the spirit plane will, naturally, on the earthly plane, belong to the Ancient Worthies, who will be in Divine favor forever.

The two expressions, "a crown of glory" and "a royal diadem," express practically the same thought, the repetition making the sentiment doubly impressive. A diadem is a crown. Crowns are generally used to add dignity and honor to the individuals wearing them; but the Scriptural expression, "A crown of glory, . . . a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," does not include the thought of a diadem that is to be **worn**, as giving glory to God; but rather as representing a **beautiful ornament in the Divine hand**, as you take something in your hand to look at the beauty and workmanship.

The jewels that will make this diadem beautiful, **when properly tested by the great Master-Workman,** are the Church. The Lord will come to make up His jewels, to secure His jewels. "God hath set the members in the Body." The text refers to the final setting in the future, in the Kingdom condition. As star differeth from star in glory, so shall these jewels differ in setting and position. This also applies to the present time. The present arrangement is subject to change in proportion as the **individual** will or **will not be fully submissive** to the Lord's will. There has been a selection of a jewel class; and the experiences of this class during the Gospel Age have been the polishing processes; and there will be a setting in the end of this Age, when the Church is completed. This began when the First Resurrection began.

The first setting in this royal diadem was, undoubtedly, our Lord Jesus Himself. He is the first in this great diadem which Jehovah has in His hand. Next will come the members of the Body, as they shall be perfected in the First Resurrection—the Apostles and sleeping saints, each as he is granted his change, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Each jewel will be placed in that particular setting for which Jehovah has seen that it is prepared.

When the mother of James and John went with them to Jesus and requested that her sons might sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left hand, He said that these places would be given to those for whom they are intended by the Father. Those positions will not be given through favor, but through justice. Any place will be glorious in this company. Only the Lord is competent to say who shall sit on the right hand and on the left. We shall be pleased to have His will done; and beyond the veil we shall have such a large sense of justice that we shall be glad to have the matter as the Father has arranged.

The Lord is first; we think probably St. Paul is next. And we think St. Peter and St. John have prominent places. We shall all be perfectly content and pleased with whatever the Father will decide. We shall be glad of any place. And any one who would not be of that spirit, of that disposition, will thereby indicate that he is not of that class which the Lord would have there. Any who will be of that class will be glad to accept the Father's decree and to prefer it to anything they could have devised.

So the Church in the hand of God is the Church in the hand of Divine power. That power will use the Church and she will be a crown of glory and a thing of beauty, **gloriously reflecting to all eternity the workmanship of our God.** How glorious it will be! How beautiful! The Lord Jehovah will have the setting of these precious jewels, one reflecting upon another in that crown of glory and diadem of beauty, with the Lord Jesus in the chief place, for the Father will not give to the Church any glory that He would not give to the Lord Himself. The Church is to be displayed before men as "a thing of beauty and a joy forever"—God's handiwork.

He is selecting the jewels now, and is providentially dealing with them. When the process of polishing shall have been completed, He will use them in a very special sense for a thousand years. As a star blazes in glory, so the Lord will make use of each one of the Church. But the use of the Church which the Lord will make at that time will be only a part of the work which He intends to accomplish. The Apostle says, "That in the ages to come He might show the **exceeding riches of His grace** in His kindness **toward us** through Christ Jesus."—Eph. 2:7.

All who are in Christ, all who are in the "elect" Body of Christ—to these God will show His **exceeding** grace. His grace and favor will be **showered** upon the Church. And the world will eventually see in the Church the culmination of all of God's creative work. The glory of the Church will be manifested in the sight of angels and of men. And so the Lord indicates the blessings that are to be ours if we are faithful in making our "calling and election sure."

Let us never forget that we are a **"peculiar people,"** separate from the great body of nominal Christians, as well as from the world, having higher hopes, aims and ambitions and favored with a clearer insight into the deep things of God, having been called out of our former darkness into His marvelous light. And if thus separate from the world and from Christians who partake largely of the worldly spirit, what wonder if we find them all out of harmony with us, and either ignoring or opposing us in the performance of the Master's will.—Z. '11: 413, 414.

How We Are to Wait on the Lord

"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart."—Psalm 27:14.

THE expression, "Wait on the Lord," does not mean so much a rendering of service to the Lord, as a waiting for the Lord, a waiting before Him, to see what is His will for us. We do not understand that it has the thought of ministering to the Lord, as a servant would wait on his master, but of patient watching until we learn what our Lord would have us do. Each child of God should wait to be guided by Him, and not run on before Him unmindful of what is the Lord's purpose for him. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths," is the counsel of the Wise Man. (Proverbs 3:5, 6.) Many of the children of God have made mistakes along this line.

Having committed our ways to the Lord, we should go forward only as He leads us. If we are not clear as to His will, let us not be in too great a hurry, nor try to guide ourselves, but present the matter to the Lord in earnest prayer, asking that we may have no will or way of our own, but may be guided only as He wills. Then let us wait and watch for the indication of His providence, and follow as He seems to lead, leaving the results with him. We are not to follow our own choice, without evidences that it is God's will. The question may sometimes be asked of us, "Are you going to do this way or that way? Are you going to this place or to that place?" Our attitude and our reply, if we have not as yet clearly ascertained the Lord's will in the matter, should be, "I am not yet fully decided. I will consider the Word of the Lord, to see how His instructions seem to apply in this case." Or, "I am watching to see what the Lord's providences seem to indicate, and am praying over the matter, that I may be guided aright." The poet expressed the right thought:

"I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much."

Those who wait on the Lord do not always seem to prosper best, from outward appearances. But the Psalmist declares that we should be of good courage as we thus wait on God. We are pursuing the right course, and shall have His blessing. We make no mistake when we wait upon Him. Others may seem to be getting ahead of us at first, but we are to "wait on the Lord."

Take no step unless you feel sure that the Lord is directing and guiding. Watch for the meaning of His providences. Study His Word. Let not your faith depart from its moorings. "Be of good courage!" "Good" courage is courage of a good degree, not merely a little courage. Be of strong courage; "and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." The word heart here may be understood to mean the soul, the being—especially the intelligent portion of us. The Lord will support us, He will fortify us and make us strong to bear, strong to do His will as it is made known to us. They that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Traits Necessary to Success

Courage, fortitude, persistency, in the service of the Lord are very necessary to the child of God. Such traits are needful even to the world. Whoever lacks these qualities of character is pretty sure to make poor success in life. Lack of courage, lack of hope, is one of the chief causes of failure in the world. Our text, however, calls attention, not to the world, but to those who belong to the Lord. The precious promises of God's word, which are only for His people, those who are wholly His, give these every reason for hope; they have full authority to be strong and of a good courage. The children of God will have trials and experiences similar to those of the world, besides experiences and trials peculiar to them as followers of Christ. These come not to us in a haphazard way, however, as to the world, but are under the direct supervision of the Lord.

Those who are new in the service of the Master might think for a time that matters should run smoothly for them, that they should not have the difficulties common to the world; that now as they were God's children He would protect them from afflictions and mistreatment. But as they study the Lord's Word, they soon see that this is not true: they see that they are to walk by faith, and not by sight. They learn that they are not to expect to have outward and tangible manifestations of His favor, but that they are to suffer with Christ—that hereunto they were called. (1 Peter 2:20, 21; Acts 14:22.) They learn that they must be obedient, and they come to see what obedience means.

The Master learned obedience—learned what obedience meant—"by the things which He suffered." The narrow way is not an easy path. His followers learn that the Lord is now calling a class that have faith in Him, a class who accept His Word fully. In time they come, too, to see that "If God be for them, who can be against them?" If matters do not go as they had expected, if trials come, they will say, "We know that all things work for good to them that love God."

So these learn, as they are guided by the Word of the Lord, that they are to be of good courage as they pursue their onward way. There are many difficulties to be surmounted, and it requires courage to surmount difficulties. But the courage born of faith in God and in His "exceeding great and precious promises" strengthens them when otherwise they might be overwhelmed. It gives them a strength to which all others are strangers.

Trust Where We Cannot Trace

If a child of God becomes discouraged and loses his hope and strength, it is because he has lost his hold upon the Lord's promises to help. To lose courage is to lose faith. Loss of faith and courage makes a child of God powerless before his foes. We must trust our Father even when the meaning of His providences is veiled from our eyes and when our efforts to serve Him seem to be hedged up. We look back at the Apostles and their experiences. The Apostle Paul was very desirous of carrying the Message of the Gospel to others. Several times he tried to go into Asia, but he was not permitted to go. He began to wonder why this was, why his efforts continued to prove failures. But the Lord revealed to him that he was to go into Greece instead. In his first Epistle to the Church at Thessalonica, he writes, "Wherefore we would have come to you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us." (1 Thessalonians 2:18.) But we are sure that the Lord would overrule the machinations of Satan and cause them to work out His own glory, and the lesson of patience and submission would be a blessing to His children.

We see that in the Garden of Gethsemane our Lord had not lost faith in God, but was fearful for a time. As He came to the closing hours of His experiences on earth, He wondered whether or not He had faithfully conformed to all the Father's requirements. He knew that the slightest infraction of God's Law would mean His death. Had He completed His sacrifice acceptably? Would He be ushered from death into Heavenly glory by a resurrection? Then He received from the Father the assurance that He had been altogether faithful. All the trials and difficulties which the Master underwent in the laying down of His life preceded Him as a sweet incense, a precious perfume, beyond the veil, into the Most Holy as shown in the type.—Leviticus 16:12, 13.

A Proper Fear

After the Jewish high priest had crumbled the sweet incense upon the fire of the golden altar, after its fragrance had penetrated beyond the second veil and had covered the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, he then himself passed beneath the veil. Every time the high priest raised the veil thus to pass under it he probably feared; for in case he had failed in any particular to carry out his sacrificial work acceptably he would have died as he passed under the veil. So our Lord Jesus knew that His work must be acceptable in the most absolute sense, else He would forever forfeit His existence. He would become as though He had not been: He would lose all.

There was no earthly being to give our Lord encouragement along this line. There was no one to say, You have done everything perfectly: you could not have done better. So the Master went alone to the Father for this assurance and for strength and courage. He prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done"; and the Father heard His prayer and gave Him the needed assurance and strength. He was heard in respect to that which He feared; and during all that night and the following day, up to the hour of His crucifixion, He was calm and courageous.

So the Lord's people should have a proper fear. Proper fear is good for them. But it should not proceed to the point of hindering their efforts and dissipating their courage. They should have the fear enjoined by St. Paul when he said, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." (Hebrews 4:1.) This proper fear the Master had. He never became discouraged, never held back from the work which the Father had given Him to do. His fear was a filial one, which engendered a watchfulness and care, a circumspection of walk and of life, that He might be wholly pleasing to the Father. This all Christians should have. We should watch lest we neglect some privilege or duty.

This proper fear will lead us to careful inspection of ourselves. We should ask ourselves, "What do I believe? Why do I believe it? We should go over the ground again. We should again go over in our minds the proofs of the correctness of our Faith. By so doing, the Lord will strengthen us in the Faith, He will strengthen our heart. If any hope in themselves, and lean upon their own strength mainly, it will be to their advantage that the Lord shall allow them to come to the point of discouragement, that they may become more timid, may lose all self-assurance, may realize their utter helplessness and weakness and their need of leaning wholly upon the Lord, of looking constantly to Him for guidance and support. As the Lord's children thus learn to wait upon Him, to them is fulfilled the promise, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."—Isaiah 40:31; Z. '15:190, 191.

What Constitutes Purity of Heart

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—Matt. 5:8.

THE WORD pure is a comprehensive term, meaning without adulteration, sincere, unsullied. Purity of heart is purity of motive, of intention, of effort, of will—purity in the sense of transparency, of truthfulness. In other words, Blessed are the honest-hearted—those who have absolutely right intentions. The word heart in this text does not refer to the organ which pumps the blood throughout the system, but to the intention, the will of the man.

In his creation, man was made in the image of God, and so was originally pure in heart—honest, sincere, truthful, perfect in intention; but by reason of the fall from his natural condition, sin and selfishness have developed in his heart, and the Godlike qualities given him in his creation have been to a considerable degree obliterated. While there are many worldly people who to some extent might claim honesty of heart, yet only those who have given themselves to God in full consecration can belong to the class which shall see Him.

When one has made a full consecration of himself and has been begotten by the Holy Spirit, he is said to have a new heart, a new will, new ambitions, new desires. Where the conversion from sin to righteousness is thorough, it may be truthfully said, "Old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) To accomplish so radical a change requires the operation of a powerful influence—that of the Holy Spirit.

Purity of thought, however, does not mean absolute perfection of thought, word and deed. To this condition no member of the fallen race can attain until the beneficent influences of the Kingdom shall have restored the race to its original perfection. But to will right, to will perfectly, to be pure in heart, is quite possible; indeed, it is very necessary to all who desire Divine approval. The standard set before us, to which our hearts, our wills, must give assent, is the Divine Standard. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—Matt. 5:48.

As long as we are in the flesh, we are obliged to think, to speak and to act through the imperfect medium of the fallen body, whose affections are continually in opposition to the new will and must be resisted. Therefore to perform all that the new will would prompt is sometimes beyond the ability of the Lord's most earnest followers: and all have need that the merit of Christ cover their blemishes, so that the new will, the new heart, may be judged of the Lord and tested as to its worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life and the attendant blessings which God has promised to the overcomer.

Only the pure in heart have the promise of seeing God. These continue faithful to the end of their pilgrimage; and not only do they attain the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus in their purity of heart intention toward all, but eventually they shall be made like Him and "see Him as He is," in the glorious change of the First Resurrection.—1 John 3:2.

Honorable Motives Indicative of Heart Purity

When one finds imperfection in himself, when he discovers that he is not up to the glorious standard of righteousness set forth in the Scriptures, when he realizes that he comes short of the glory of God, then it becomes his privilege to seek to amend his conduct. The very act of deciding to do right is the beginning of the process by which one gets a new mind, a new will. This renewing of the mind corresponds to the perfecting of certain organs of the brain.

The will is able to control the whole body. Occasionally there will be opposition from one or another of the lower organs, which will resent the control of the superior ones; but in a general way, the will has the mastery. The qualities which constitute the mind were originally a part of the image of God: but all of the powers of the human mind have been injured by the fall of man. All have been more or less weakened.

The organs of veneration, conscientiousness and firmness form a very powerful combination. If these qualities rule the life, the growth of the new mind will be rapid. Whoever has sufficient brain capacity to determine to do right and to serve God to the best of his ability, may, notwithstanding the weakness of his flesh, will to live in accordance with the Divine standard. So long as the motives of his new will are honorable, he is pure in heart; and as long as he maintains that condition, he has the assurance that he may ultimately reach perfection through obedience.

In olden times, this purity of heart intention was as much as any one could have. On one occasion, Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15.) In that statement the old warrior manifested purity of heart—the determination of the mind to serve the Lord. David and all the other Ancient Worthies had this determination. This was as much as they could do; and therefore, they had this testimony, that they "pleased God."—Heb. 11:5, 6, 39.

Whoever has this determination shall be blessed. He shall one day see the light of God's countenance. If, however, for a season he should fail to maintain this standard, there would be a cloud between him and the Lord. This can be removed only by repentance and forgiveness. Then with the Psalmist he could say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."—Psa. 116:7.

During the Gospel Age, the people of God may have, not only this purity of heart, or conversion to the Lord, turning to Him in fulness of consecration through the precious blood of Christ, but also something more. They may have the Divine acceptance of that consecration and the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Therefore these are the children of God in a sense peculiar to this Age. These may cry, "Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15.) To them, God is not merely the Controller of the Universe, but their Father.

During the Gospel Age, the people of God may have special blessings greater than anything previously enjoyed. They have the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, which comes through the Divine Word, the Divine providences, etc. It requires an illumination of our mental conceptions in order that we may see God. Therefore the Church of Christ, who are begotten of the Holy Spirit, may see Him with the eyes of their understanding in a sense in which the Ancient Worthies could not.

If we maintain our purity of heart by purity of mind, we may have the assurance of future blessings as well as of present favor and happiness. If this be our course in "the life that now is," we have the Lord's promise that we shall see Him in a very special sense in the life "which is to come." We shall be changed to spirit beings and shall see Him as He is and shall share His glory. Every one who has this hope within him purifies himself, even as the Lord is pure.—1 John 3:2, 3; Z. '12:389, 390.

"We Beheld His Glory in the Holy Mount"

Matt. 17:1-9.

"We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."—John 1:14.

LITTLE did the disciples imagine that our Lord's statement that some of them should not taste of death until they had seen the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom, would be fulfilled within six days to Peter, James and John in the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet so it was, and evidently it produced a great and designed effect upon the witnesses, one of whom, writing respecting it says (2 Pet. 1:16-18), "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God, the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

The transfiguration scene was not all that it appeared:—it was a "vision," as our Lord explained to the disciples when they were coming down from the mount. In this vision, as in all visions, the unreal appears real. Just so it was in the vision of John, on the Isle of Patmos, described in the book of Revelation. He saw, he heard, he talked, yet the things thus shown him in the vision were not realities—not beasts with many heads and many horns, and angels and vials and thrones, nor real dragons, etc., merely a vision. And a vision was in every sense of the word just as good, and really better suited to the purpose, than realities would have been.

Moses and Elias were not present on the mountain, personally, but were merely represented to the disciples in the vision. We know this not only from our Lord's statement, that it was a "vision," but also from his statement that no man had ascended up to heaven. (John 3:13; Acts 2:34.) We know also that Moses and Elijah could not have been there, since they were not resurrected from the dead; because our Lord Jesus himself was the "First-fruits of them that slept"—"the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence." (1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18.) Furthermore the Apostle to the Hebrews distinctly mentions Moses and the prophets (which would include Elijah) and their faithfulness in the past and their acceptance with God; but he points out that they had not yet received their reward, and that they would not receive it until after we (the Gospel Church) shall have received our reward as joint-heirs with Christ in his Kingdom. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the [blessings of the] promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11:39, 40.

Since, then, the appearance of Moses and Elias with our Lord was an appearance merely, we properly inquire, What was the significance or meaning of this vision? We reply, It was a tableau, illustrative of the glorious Kingdom of Christ, as our Lord had predicted, and as Peter understood it and expressed it. In this tableau, the three disciples formed no part. They were merely witnesses. Christ was the central figure; his features and garments, shining with miraculous lustre, represented in figure the glories which belong to the spirit nature, which our Lord received at his resurrection, "the express image of the Father's person." It is this same spirit glory that is represented in the visions of Revelation, where our Lord is represented with eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet bright as burning brass, etc. (Rev. 1:14, 15; 2:18.) At his second advent our Lord will no longer be flesh because, as he testified, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." He is now, and ever will be, a glorious spirit being of the highest order—the divine nature: and the transfiguration was intended to convey to the minds of his disciples a faint conception of the glory which excelleth.

Moses represented the faithful overcomers who preceded our Lord, described by the Apostle (Heb. 11:39, 40), who cannot be made perfect until the Kingdom shall have been established. Elijah represented the overcomers of the Gospel age. The topic discussed in the vision was our Lord's crucifixion. (Luke 9:31.) The cross of Christ is thus pointed out as being the necessary thing in order that he might enter into his glory, as he himself expressed the matter after his resurrection, saying, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26.) There could have been no Kingdom glory without the redemptive work. But this vision portrays the Kingdom glories which will ultimately result from our Lord's death.

Possibly, too, the vision was intended to represent the two classes who will be associated with the Lord in his Kingdom, first the Church—the body of Christ, his bride and joint-heir, who shall be like him and see and share his glory, as spirit beings. These in the present time are represented by Elijah. Second, the overcomers of the past, who shall be the earthly representatives of the Kingdom, as per our Lord's statement:—The world "shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom;" because they will be restored, perfected human beings: but the world will not see the Lord and the Church, his glorified spouse, because they will all have been changed from flesh and blood (human nature) and will be spirit beings and of the divine nature, and hence as invisible to men as are God and the angels.—1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; Heb. 11:27.

Of course, the disciples did not clearly comprehend the matter at the time, yet they realized a blessing and felt that it was "good to be there." Their meeting had started as a prayer-meeting: the three favorite disciples of the Lord accompanying him on this occasion, as on several other occasions—for instance, when he went in to awaken the daughter of Jairus from the sleep of death, and a little later than this in the Garden of Gethsemane, they were again his chosen and closest companions. We cannot suppose that the choice of these was an arbitrary one, but must suppose that there was something about these three men that made them specially companionable to the Lord. One thing about them that impresses every reader of the New Testament record is their faith in the Lord and their zeal for his cause. It was James and John who, in their zeal (but not according to knowledge), were about to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, because they did not promptly recognize and cordially receive the Master. It was Peter who first promptly confessed Jesus as the Christ,—the same Peter who drew his sword in the Master's defense, and declared that he would die with him. The Master himself was of a warm temperament, and naturally and properly was most drawn toward those who were similarly fervent.

There is a lesson here for us, to the effect that, if we would be closest to the Master and most frequently privileged to have fellowship with him, we should similarly have and cultivate this earnest, zealous spirit. Cold, calculating people may have other good qualities, but there is no room for coldness or even luke-warmness on the part of those who have once tasted that the Lord is gracious. With such, the love enkindled should lead to a consuming zeal. It was thus with our Lord Jesus, and this was one of the reasons why he was beloved of the Father. Speaking for him, the prophet said, "The zeal of thine house hath consumed me." Let all who desire to be pleasing in the Lord's sight become so filled with the same spirit of zeal for righteousness and truth that it will consume them as sacrifices upon the Lord's altar. Thus they will be most pleasing and acceptable to him through Jesus our Lord. As a rule, only the warm and zealous ever get free from Babylon. The others coolly calculate and weigh matters so long that the spirit of the world, the flesh and the devil puts fresh blinds on them, even after they have gotten into the light and see considerable.

Peter proposed making some booths on the mountaintop for the Lord and his guests. Luke adds, "Not knowing what he said." He was bewildered, confused, but in harmony with his natural temperament wished to say something. The voice from heaven, however, seemed to say, Be still! hearken rather to the words of my beloved Son. Not a few need to learn the lesson of quietness—to hear and learn, be taught of God, before they have much to say. Peter evidently learned, as we may judge from his after conduct, to be slower to speak and swifter to hear. (James 1:19.) This is an important lesson to all who would be servants of the Lord: we must learn that of ourselves we know nothing, and can do nothing aright. The proper learning of this lesson means a lesson in humility and in patience, a lesson respecting our own nothingness, and that "our sufficiency is of God." Those who reach this condition become apt students in the school of Christ—not forgetful hearers, but doers of the Word: and such only are prepared to teach the truth to others. Those who are too forward and ready to teach, before they have received instruction from the Lord, are very apt not to know what they say, as was Peter's case; and if such be true-hearted and worthy of being used of the Lord as his servants, they are very apt to receive numerous reproofs from time to time.

The first lesson for such to learn is that "The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Thus, Peter's rash expression, "not knowing what he said," found a reproof in the voice from heaven which said, "Hear ye Him." And fear fell upon the disciples.

Not only is the fear of the Lord valuable as a beginning of true wisdom, but it is valuable all our journey through. One tendency amongst those who have received the light of present truth, and who lose thereby the terrible and slavish fear inspired by misrepresentations of the divine character and plan, is to lose all fear. And according to the Scriptures this is a very dangerous condition, an ultra freedom that is apt to lead to license, under our present imperfect conditions.

It is true that "perfect love casteth out fear," but it is also true that perfect love is a very scarce commodity on earth even amongst the saints. Hence the Apostle urges, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) The fear which we are to lose entirely is "the fear of man which bringeth a snare." He who loses the fear of God, and the fear of losing the great prize which God has held out before us, is in a very dangerous position: he is likely to become self-conscious and self-satisfied, and readily drops into the condition where he does not believe even in the just sentence against sinners, the second death, and where he is proportionately careless respecting the keeping of his own words and thoughts and deeds in strictest alignment with the principles laid down in the Word of the Lord. Having lost his fear of the Lord, he rapidly loses carefulness respecting the Word of the Lord, and inclines more and more to "lean to his own understanding," and becomes blinded to his own faults.

Let us note carefully additional encouragements to fear held out in the Scriptures. Some of these are as follows:—"O fear the Lord, ye his saints." "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him." "Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth forever." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him." "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him." (Psa. 34:9; 22:23; 118:4; 103:13, 17; 145:19; 147:11.) Our Lord says, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear." (Luke 12:5.) The Apostle Paul says, "Be not highminded, but fear." "Let us also fear." (Rom. 11:20; Heb. 4:1.) The Apostle Peter says, "Honor men; fear God;" and "He that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." (1 Pet. 2:17; Acts 10:35.) God says through the prophet that they who fear his name, are the ones who speak often together, and of whom a book of remembrance is made. And again he promises, "To you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his beams." (Mal. 3:16; 4:2.) Of our dear Redeemer himself it is recorded that Christ "was heard in that he feared."—Heb. 5:7.

The lesson of these various scriptures is that, to lose fear of God, in the sense of losing fear of his displeasure or fearing to come short of the grand possibilities which he has so graciously put within our reach, would be a most serious loss, as it would probably cost us our eternal life; for those who have lost this fear are like steam-engines which have lost their governors, and are apt to run with too much liberty to self-destruction and unfitness for service. Hence, as the Apostle again says to the pilgrims who seek the heavenly country,—"If ye call on him as Father, . . . pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Pet. 1:17); not in levity, nor in worldly frivolities, nor in sensualities, nor in land and money grabbing, nor even carelessly and slothfully, but in earnest watchfulness of every word and act, to please the Lord and to copy his character and thus to make your calling and election sure to a place in his Kingdom, when it shall be established in power and great glory.—Z. '98:111, 112.

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Not a profession of faith, but the exercise of an active, living faith brings the blessing.—Z. '98:231.

The Work of the New Creature

"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Romans 8:13, 14.

OUR text does not mean that we are to mortify our bodies in the way that some have thought. According to history, there have been earnest souls in the past who have used whips on their bodies until they produced severe pain, and then have worn hair jackets, etc. Sometimes these bodily tortures have been carried so far that the skin would be covered with sores. Others have undertaken to mortify their bodies by lying down to be literally walked on, etc. We cannot question that whoever would do these things must have a motive for so doing, and we cannot think it a bad motive; nevertheless, we believe that those who do such things have a wrong conception of the meaning of our text.

By the expression, "Mortify the deeds of the flesh," the Scriptures mean that the people of God are to put to death in themselves all natural practises that are not in harmony with the Spirit of God. We are all born sinners, the Bible declares, and therefore we are not to follow the bent of our fallen nature. We are to have the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, which will guide us in the way in which we should go. We are to mortify every inclination of the body that is not indorsed by the new mind.

There are certain qualities of the mortal body that are to be destroyed, and therefore are to be warred against at all times. Then there are other qualities which are to be utilized in the service of righteousness. Once we were under sin; but now we have a new mind. Henceforth we are to treat the old creature as an earthen vessel merely. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we are to know how to do this. The first step in the process is to reckon our body dead. Having reckoned it dead toward sin and toward everything of an earthly nature, we are then to reckon it alive in the sense of awakening, quickening, all the tendencies, attributes, that can be brought into the service of God. This is the second step.

The Daily Battle of the Spirit-Begotten

After we have been begotten of the Spirit, we are New Creatures. In every sense of the word we are free from our body. Whatever parts of our human nature we find to be in opposition to God and His will we are to mortify, deaden, as soon as we discover them. This process is a continual warring against, fighting against, the old nature. The Apostle distinctly calls it a warring between the flesh and the Spirit. But while warring against certain elements which are legally dead, we find that the flesh is not dead actually. But if we live according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh, God will not recognize the flesh, nor shall we. We shall recognize only the New Creature.

The battle is a daily one. All our members must be brought into harmony with God and His will. We are to endeavor to see everything from the Divine standpoint. The thought is not that we shall ever perfect these mortal bodies, but that while we are living on the earth and have to do with these bodies, it is our duty and our privilege to make the body do the will of the New Creature.

Our bodies were slaves to Sin. Now we say, "I have the right to control this body. I am a New Creature, but this is my body. I shall increase my power over this body, and use it more and more in the service of the Lord. It is not my intention to do foolish things—to leap from a pinnacle to see whether my body will remain alive; but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I am to get out of it the most that I can, in the service of the new Master."

All this is necessary to our development in character. God has called the Church to glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with Christ. If we do not prove overcomers, we shall never be ready for so great an exaltation. This exalted position will not be given to any mortal merely because he says that he desires to be something different from what he is. On the contrary, we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Those who profess entire consecration to God must demonstrate this by putting away everything that is contrary to the Divine will. As these seek to build character, they will be growing "strong in the power of His might." Those who will pursue this course to the end are the class that He is calling for, and those alone will prove worthy of the place to be given to the "more than overcomers."

Rejoicing in Tribulation

The world will have a thousand years during which to bring their bodies into harmony with the will of God. Gradually mankind will come to the place where they will be thoroughly loyal to the Lord. The stony heart will be taken away. To all those who through obedience reach this condition God will be pleased to give life everlasting.

But with the Church it is different. During this Gospel Age the Lord is selecting and directing those who of their own will desire to lay down their lives in His service. They love Him, and He is pleased to call them His holy ones. No good thing will He withhold from this class. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, what God hath in reservation for those that love Him—those who have through consecration been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and who are going forward from grace to grace, living not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For this class God has provided His very best things.

To this class the Scriptures declare that "through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God." Some might say that these have a hard time. But all Christians can agree that it is possible to reach that degree of development where one can rejoice in all these experiences in which the flesh is being mortified, deadened. This is not because we are so different from other people that we like what they dislike, but because we see a reason why this tribulation is permitted. We know that this is

God's plan for us; and by these evidences of mortification of the will of the flesh, of the things of the flesh, we see that we are growing in the favor of our Heavenly Father.

These have the peace of God ruling in their hearts. They know that all of their affairs are under Divine supervision. The world have their troubles and fears and forebodings. But those who have put their trust in the Lord have a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. But we cannot explain this to the world; for they cannot understand it.—Z. '14: 357, 358.

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To be a child in guilelessness and simplicity, is one thing, while to be a child in understanding and development of character is another; and it is in the former, and not in the latter respect, that we are to be children. And it is in this respect that the people of God are spoken of as his "little ones" (Luke 17:2), and by the beloved John as "my little children." They may be old in years and gray-headed, but their hearts are young and preserve the sweet simplicity of childhood. On the other hand, they may be ripe in character and learned in the wisdom of God, as was the Apostle Paul, who said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." And the same apostle also says, "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."—1 Cor. 13:11; 14:20; 16:13.

The simplicity of childhood, realizing its need, confesses it and asks mercy, instead of attempting to deceive itself by philosophizing. In this respect we must continue "children," we must continue to admit our own imperfection, continue to admit our need of mercy, continue to trust in the precious blood provided to cleanse us from all sin, if we would continue to have the Heavenly Father's ear and favor.—Z. '96: 98.

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We urge upon all the importance of sincere prayer;—private or "closet" prayers, "family" or "household" prayer and "social" prayer with fellow-Christians. Each has its special importance to everyone who is running the heavenly race; and each has Scripture sanction. They need not be lengthy; indeed few of the Scriptural examples of prayer were so; but they must be sincere, from the heart and not a lip service. Heart prayers are always accompanied by efforts of life in harmony with the prayers; while lip prayers are usually in contradiction of the living epistle. Prayer without corresponding endeavor is like faith without works; it is a dead, worse than useless, thing.

Prayer is required, not to change God's plans, but to bring our hearts into such a condition as will prepare us to receive and appreciate the blessings which God has freely promised and which he delights to grant to his children. Hence our requests should be such only as God has authorized us to ask and expect. Our requests should be unselfish: The Apostle remarks that some ask and receive not because they ask amiss (not in harmony with the Lord's arrangements), to consume the things asked for upon selfish desires.—James 4:3; Z. '96: 98.

AT CLOSE OF DAY

If you sit down at set of sun,
And count the acts that you have done,
  And, counting, find
One self-denying act, one word
That eased the heart of him who heard,
  One glance most kind,
That fell like sunshine where it went—
Then you may count that day well spent.

But if, through all the livelong day,
You've cheered no heart by yea or nay;
  If through it all
You've nothing done that you can trace,
That brought the sunshine to one face;
  No act most small,
That helped some soul at trifling cost—
Then count that day as worse than lost.
—Z. '93: 7.

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It is true of the spiritual seed of Abraham that the Lord defends their cause, and that those who afflict or injure them, figuratively injure the apple of the Lord's eye, while those who bless them are sure to be compensated. Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water to one of the least of the Lord's disciples shall eventually receive a great reward for the kindness—if not in the present life, then, in the life to come.—Matt. 10:42; Zech. 2:8; Z. '01: 231.

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People are always glad to get the chance to judge others. Someone may ask, "When may we have the chance to judge? We would like to have it now." We reply, "Yours is the wrong spirit. Get rid of it or you will never be a judge at all. God is selecting another class to be judges—a saintly class that will be fully satisfied to judge nothing before the time, but to leave everything to Him.—Z. '12: 94.

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Those who become the people of God, who accept Him as their Guide and Leader, should never murmur, never complain. To do so is to dispute the Divine Wisdom and the Divine promises, and to that extent to break their covenant of faith, obedience and loyalty.—Z. '13: 267.

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We cannot be far from our change; and we advise that all of the Lord's people live day by day just as though this was the last day on this side the Veil, and that tonight or tomorrow would usher us into the glorious things beyond the Veil. Living in this way will surely be at least a good experience for us, bringing blessings and ripening of character. What a blessed way to live!—every day in anticipation of seeing our Redeemer and sharing in His wonderful work! The things connected with this present time seem less and less important to us, on account of which our names are cast out as evil by those who are living for all they can get out of the present life.—Z. '14 : 331.

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It would be very unwise for us to speculate on anything not revealed in the Bible. We prefer to keep our eyes open and not allow our minds to specially dwell on any one theory. Our confidence is not in any one method, but in the **ONE** who has all power. **We feel sure that all He has promised will be fulfilled.** It is not necessary to decide the point in our own mind even, let alone mentioning it to others.—Z. '13 : 285.

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He who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it. (Philippians 1 : 6.) But how few children of God, comparatively, have this "full assurance of faith" which is our glorious privilege! How few can say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and **I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever!**" Surely, by God's grace I shall ultimately gain the Heavenly Kingdom and the glorious things which He has promised to those who love Him. The few who can thus enter fully into sympathy with the Apostle Paul and the Prophet David in their expressions of confidence have therein a great joy, a great blessing, a great rest of heart which none others possess.

Let us therefore inquire why it is that the number who thus enter into the rest of faith is so small. . . . What is the difficulty with these? Why do they not have the "full assurance of faith" of their acceptance? We answer that their difficulty is a lack of trust in God: and such a lack is not pleasing to Him, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He **is,** and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11 : 6.) Z. '14 : 90.

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Our Lord calls us to freedom from sin, and from Satan, the great task-master; and the Apostle urges us to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free" indeed; and yet it is a great mistake that some make, to suppose that there are no restraints or limitations upon the "new creatures in Christ Jesus;" our Redeemer has a yoke and a burden for all who become his followers. The yoke, however, is easy for those whom it **fits**; and with that yoke the burden is light. The yoke is a self-imposed one, very different, therefore, from the yoke of Satan, which is fastened upon his slaves, the galling yoke of sin, attached to whch is a heavy penalty or burden,—sorrow, death. Those who accept Christ and whom he sets free from Satan's yoke are invited to "take" the yoke of Christ and to put it upon themselves. This means **consecration,** the binding of ourselves, our time, our influence, means, opportunities, all, to the Lord's service. The burden it brings might be esteemed a heavy one by some; it is esteemed very heavy by the world who know not of the counterbalancing peace and joy and blessing. Our burden means, sometimes, the loss of all earthly things which we have held most sacred and most dear; yet even such a burden is light by reason of the joy and peace of the Lord counterbalancing it. As the Apostle Paul expressed it, we may well count all our losses, all our crosses, our burdens, as light afflictions, because of the excellency of the knowledge of divine favors and blessings which we have received through Christ Jesus our Lord. Yea, we count all things that we have sacrificed for the Lord and his cause but as loss and dross that we may win Christ and joint heirship with him in his Kingdom. —Z. '98 : 61.

◆

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding."

This is the blessed privilege of all the sons of God; and years of experience of many precious saints, testify that the Lord is always faithful to those who put their trust in him, look for his leading and gratefully acknowledge his faithfulness.—Z. '93 :173.

◆

"The Lord be with you!" steals the benediction
With solemn splendor like a falling star;
In morns of joy and midnights of affliction,
It breathes its echoed sweetness near and far.

"The Lord be with you!" when the shadows hold
you;
And prove His loving power to soothe and bless;
When dangers darken and when fears enfold you,
"The Lord be with you!" in His tenderness.
—Z. '13 : 27.

◆

Meekness and gentleness are commendable; but there are times when they would mean disloyalty to God.—Z. '13 :14.

◆

In reality a man is not always what on the surface he seems to be. His real character is deep down below—the purpose of his life. These are not the mere transitory thoughts, but the deep fissures of thought, if we may so designate those which involve the whole life.—Z. '13 :163.

◆

Love, should be stimulated by a retrospective glance;—discerning the mercies of the Lord toward us should enthuse us with loving zeal for Him and his. "We love him because he first loved us!" We seek to do those things pleasing to our Lord because we love him, and in proportion as we love him we will delight in such obedience and service,—even at the cost of self-sacrifice.—Z. '03 : 3.

◆

Our present attitude, dear brethren, should be one of great gratitude toward God, increasing appreciation of the beautiful Truth which He has granted us the privilege of seeing and being identified with.—Z. '16 : 265.

◆

Beloved fellow "sheep," let us remember that those who resist the Adversary's encroachments and allurements and wiles and attacks, from any quarter, will be the stronger therefor, and be the more closely bounden together in love and sympathy and the more firmly established in the letter and spirit of the "perfect law of liberty."—Z. '98 : 58.